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Damascus Declaration Conference

Foreign Ministers Arrive in Damascus for Meetings

Saudi Arabia's al-Faysal

JN2712173795 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1650 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Dec (SANA)—His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the Saudi Arabian foreign minister, arrived in Damascus this evening to participate in the Damascus Declaration states foreign ministers conference to be held this evening.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and ambassadors of the Damascus Declaration states.

In a statement to SANA, al-Faysal stressed the importance of these meetings during which the Joint Arab Action document will be approved, all issues of concern to the Arab nation will be discussed, and the Damascus Declaration will be activated.

Al-Faysal said that the Damascus Declaration States take a firm position in support of Arab causes. He voiced the hope that the ministers' meetings will serve the Arab nation's interests.

Kuwait's al-Sabah

JN2712175995 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1652 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Dec (SANA)—His Highness Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the first deputy prime minister and foreign minister of the State of Kuwait arrived in Damascus this evening to participate in the meetings of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and ambassadors of the Damascus Declaration states.

In a statement to the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, Shaykh al-Sabah expressed his happiness to be in Damascus and wished President Hafiz al-Asad continued health and the Syrian people advancement and prosperity. He stressed the importance of the Damascus meetings to discuss the Arab situation and developments and to endorse the Joint Arab Action document.

Egyptian, Qatari, UAE Ministers

JN2712192395 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1740 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Dec (SANA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa arrived in Damascus this evening to take part in the meetings of the Damascus Declaration states.

He was welcomed at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the ambassadors of the Damascus Declaration states.

In a statement to a SANA correspondent, Musa said: During these meetings, we will study and issue the Joint Arab Action Document which we have discussed over past meetings. We will also discuss the overall Arab and regional situation. Consultations will be held on the world situation, the future of the region, and issues of interest to the Damascus Declaration states.

Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani also arrived in Damascus this evening.

He was welcomed at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the ambassadors of the Damascus Declaration states.

Shaykh Hamad made a statement to a SANA correspondent in which he expressed happiness at being in Damascus. He said that the Joint Arab Action Document will be one of the most important points that will be discussed during these meetings. He said the conferees will discuss the latest developments in the region of interest to the Damascus Declaration states. [Damascus SANA in Arabic at 1735 GMT on 27 December reports that Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Na'imi, foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates, UAE, and Shaykh Fahim Bin- Sultan al-Qasimi, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also arrived in Damascus to attend the meetings of the Damascus Declaration states' foreign ministers]

Oman's Bin-'Abdallah

JN2712200295 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 27 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, arrived in Damascus this evening. He was welcomed at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the Omani ambassador in Damascus. [passage omitted]

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Delegation Heads Hold 'Closed Session'

JN2812113995 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1020 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 28 Dec (SANA) — The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states held a closed session this morning. The session was attended only by the delegation heads.

Syria's al-Shar' on Damascus Meetings, Israel Talks

JN2812090695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The meetings of the 12th session of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration member states will resume in Damascus today.

The meetings began last night. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' led the Syrian delegation to the meetings, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa led the Egyptian delegation, Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal led the Saudi delegation, Foreign Minister Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Nu'aymi led the united Arab Emirates delegation, Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah led the Bahraini delegation, Foreign Minister Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah led the Omani delegation, Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani led the Qatari delegation, and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah led the Kuwaiti delegation. The delegation of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] was led by GCC Secretary General Shaykh Fahim Bin- Sultan al-Qasimi.

Following the meeting, al-Shar' made a statement to journalists in which he said: We have agreed on the agenda and on forming a drafting committee which will meet tomorrow [28 December] to discuss the results of the draft committee's meeting.

The foreign minister added: The agenda of the meeting includes a number of issues related to the march of cooperation among the Damascus Declaration states, and to the approval the final form of the document on the framework of the joint Arab action, in addition to the Arab situation, as aspects of developments in the region, the peace process, and other issues which might be proposed by the delegations.

Answering a question on the peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track which began near Washington, the minister said: We cannot predict the results of the meetings which will be held near Washington. However, there is some optimism. Certainly, the Syrian side is serious. We also believe that both the U.S. cosponsor and the Israeli side are serious. We hope that the Washington meeting will produce results which would contribute to advancing the process of the just and comprehensive peace, and turn this optimism into reality so that we can feel it and make the peace process achieve its goals.

Answering a question on Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statement that Israel will pay a dear price, and why the Israelis do not speak about a comprehensive withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines, al-Shar' said: We spoke about a comprehensive withdrawal to the 4 June lines and from southern Lebanon. The formulas about which the Israeli side spoke show that the Israeli side realizes that Syria will not accept anything short of full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June lines. In our assessment, providing that we have said this in the past, this is the essence and substance of Resolution 242, as well as the essence of the U.S. initiative and the right of the people to restore their full rights.

He added: President Hafiz al-Asad have clearly expressed this at the joint news conference he held with President Husni Mubarak in Cairo several days ago.

Answering a question about upgrading the level of negotiations with Israel, and to which level they would be upgraded, the foreign minister said: The upgrading of the level of negotiations is not on the agenda now. Among the most important ideas of the other side is that the atmosphere should be comfortable for both sides and without preconditions.

Egypt's Musa Cited on Meeting, Emphasizes Iraqi Unity

JN2712205195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Dec 95

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus on 27 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Imam] Since the end of the Gulf war, what have the Damascus Declaration meetings accomplished, and what are the means to activate this declaration from the economic and security aspects?

[Musa] We hope that during these meetings we will issue the Joint Arab Action Document, which deals with the economic, political, and security aspects as well as general coordination among the states. What has been achieved is in fact a fine Arab grouping among eight Arab states, which will coordinate with each other more than before, and consult among themselves in a positive way. During these meetings we will discuss almost all the hot issues. Therefore, I believe that what has been achieved, or what is being achieved is something good.

[Al-Imam] Will the meetings tackle the issue of preserving or the need to preserve the Iraqi territorial integrity contrary to....

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[Musa, interrupting] This is already agreed upon. The unity and territorial integrity of Iraq is a matter that cannot be compromised or tampered with. Any opinion contrary to this is unacceptable.

[Al-Imam] What about the federation proposed by King Husayn?

[Musa] This question does not arise because this is a matter that concerns the Iraqis themselves. No one decides for the Iraqis except the Iraqis themselves regarding the future of their country, whether it is a federation or not. What is important is that Iraq is one state and this is a constant principle.

Foreign Ministers Issue Final Statement

JN2812175895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Final statement issued at the end of the 12th session of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states, held in Damascus on 27 and 28 December — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In reply to the invitation extended from the Syrian Arab Republic, the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states held their 12th session in Damascus on 27 and 28 December 1995.

The meeting was chaired by Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister of the Syrian Arab Republic. The meeting was attended by His excellency Rashid 'Abdallah al-Nu'aymi, foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates; His Excellency Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah, foreign minister of the State of Bahrain; His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister of Saudi Arabia; His Excellency Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs in the Sultanate of Oman; His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, foreign minister of the State of Qatar; His Excellency Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister of the State of Kuwait; and His Excellency 'Amr Musa, foreign minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The meeting was also attended by Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al- Qasimi, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states expressed thanks and gratitude to His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad for providing the chance to meet with his excellency and listen to his sound directives which emphasize the need to coordinate and cooperate in order to bolster joint Arab action in accordance with the principles and objectives drawn by the Damascus Declaration.

The ministers exchanged views and consulted on ways of advancing cooperation among the declaration states and what is expected from them in light of the developments in the Arab and international arenas to elevate the status of the Arab nation, serve the pan-Arab causes, protect the security of the Arab nation, realize joint Arab interests, and preserve the Arab identity.

The ministers emphasized the importance of entrenching coordination and cooperation among the declaration states in implementation of its principles and objectives and to confront the grave challenges facing the Arab nation.

Within the framework of enhancing joint Arab action and cooperation and solidarity among the declaration states as a basis that can be built on within the framework of the Arab League, the ministers reviewed the joint Arab action document, which was issued by the 11th Manama session, in light of the remarks made by the ministers during their meeting held on the sidelines of the last Arab League Council meeting and the current session. They expressed satisfaction with the unanimous approval of the final document. They emphasized that necessary measures should be taken to implement it and to lodge it with the Arab League.

The ministers asserted their countries' keenness on ensuring the success of the peace process, which is based on international legitimacy and Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace principle, and safeguarding the national and political rights of the Palestinian people.

The ministers have noted with satisfaction the atmosphere of openness that has led to the resumption of negotiations on the Syrian track, and the inseparability of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. They praised the Syrian Arab Republic's position and emphasized their full support for it and for its just demands. They commended its unwavering position and serious efforts to accomplish a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan back to the 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon.

The ministers underscored the need for Israel's implementation of Security Council resolutions pertinent to Arab Jerusalem and settlements in the occupied Arab lands which Israel continues to establish in violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the objectives of the peace process. The ministers also reaffirmed the Palestinian people's right to self- determination.

The ministers renewed their sympathy for the Iraqi people in their current ordeal for which the Iraqi Government is fully responsible as a result of its

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rejection to implement Security Council resolutions, which provide for temporary measures to alleviate this suffering. The ministers renewed their absolute concern for Iraq's unity and expressed their objection to any policies or measures aimed at undermining Iraq's territorial integrity.

Proceeding from their countries' relations with Turkey, the ministers called on the Turkish Government to abstain from pouring out polluted waters on Syrian land and to reach a just and acceptable agreement on the Euphrates' water distribution among the littoral countries in implementation of the agreement concluded by the Syrian and Turkish prime ministers on 20 January 1993. The ministers called for reaching a final, negotiated solution to the Euphrates waters' distribution among the littoral countries.

The ministers reviewed the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They expressed hope that the Dayton agreement, which was concluded by the warring parties, will achieve peace in the region. They urged the international community to provide assistance and support to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to rebuild what was destroyed by war and to achieve development.

The ministers discussed the phenomenon of violence and international terrorism, as well as the policies and practices used in the name of true Islam at a time when these policies and practices conflict with its principles and tolerance. They reiterated their denunciation of all kinds and forms of terrorism. They also denounced the tendentious campaigns and the parties directing these campaigns against some of their states in an attempt to provoke disturbances and acts of terrorism and sabotage in these countries, as well as to undermine these countries' security and stability.

The ministers voiced their countries' solidarity and cooperation to support all steps and measures taken on the Arab and international levels to confront and uproot terrorism. In this regard, they reaffirm the need to differentiate between the condemned terrorist acts and people's legitimate struggle to liberate their territory under foreign occupation.

The ministers expressed their concern over the tragic situation in sisterly Somalia and appealed to the concerned parties to champion the higher interests of their country and to cooperate with all efforts, particularly the efforts of the Arab League and the OAU, to achieve peace and national reconciliation.

Proceeding from the concern of the Damascus Declaration states to strengthen the role of the Arab League and reinforce its potential to assume its pan-Arab responsibilities to serve the Arab nation's causes and interests, in its capacity as the home of the Arabs, the ministers praised the efforts of the Arab League secretary general to achieve these objectives. They also discussed the financial position from which the Arab League is suffering and urged all Arab League member states to pay their contributions. The ministers are looking forward to discussing the financial position of the Arab League and to rationalize expenditure in the coming session of the Arab league Council.

The ministers expressed their concern over the continuous bloodshed in Afghanistan and appealed to all Afghan factions to abide by the cease-fire and to implement the Mecca agreement for achieving peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

The ministers also expressed their deep concern over the continued bloodshed in Chechenya, reiterating their call on the disputing parties to swiftly resolve their differences through dialogue and understanding to reach a fair solution.

The ministers expressed their thanks and gratitude to the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic for hosting this brotherly gathering and for the hospitality they and their accompanying delegations were accorded. The ministers are looking forward to their coming meeting in the Sultanate of Oman by June 1996.

Conference Delegates Give Statements, Depart

JN2812205395 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video; italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states left Damascus this evening after taking part in the 12th two-day meeting of the Damascus Declaration states.

The foreign ministers were seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the ambassadors of Damascus Declaration states to Syria.

His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister, gave a statement to the Television News correspondent in which he said: *The results are excellent and came according to what was expected of these meetings, which sought the higher Arab interest. The fact that the [joint Arab action] document was acknowledged is firm evidence that the Damascus Declaration states seek to reform the Arab situation. We hope that what was agreed upon will be a blessed step in this framework. We are also glad about the talks and coordination that*

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was conducted among Damascus declaration states with regard to all issues of discussion.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa gave a statement in which he said: *You have listened to the final statement, which included the issues that were discussed. The statement reflected the extent of coordination and agreement represented in issuing and announcing the joint Arab action document and lodging it with the General Secretariat of the Arab League. Damascus Declaration states also defined their positions, in the statement, on the current problems and important regional issues. Thus I believe the meeting was successful and good. I think that the Damascus grouping has become effective.*

Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabir Al Thani gave a statement in which he said: *In fact, the meeting was fruitful and good. The spirit of responsibility and brotherhood among all has prevailed in the meeting. I think the results were good. The document was acknowledged and will be submitted to the Arab League.*

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, gave a statement in which he said: *Praise be to God, the meeting ended with an agreement on the document of the Damascus Declaration. All issues listed on the agenda were discussed, including the issue of Iraq and Iran. An agreement was reached on all issues as you have heard in the final statement. I would like to assert that this meeting was extremely important and successful. Thanks be to God that the meeting, which started and ended in Damascus, acknowledged the document, which is the most important thing.*

Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah gave the following statement: *I believe this meeting realized its projected goal, that is, the final ratification of the joint Arab action document. A major step regarding action among Damascus Declaration states was taken. We believe this meeting marked the end of a stage and moving toward a new one. We are optimistic these meetings will be held within the framework of coordination, cooperation, and exchange of opinion on various important issues in light of developments on the level of the Arab world and the world as a whole. This a good meeting seeking cooperation and coordination among the Arab brethren. It is a model to be emulated.*

Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Nu'aymi, foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates, gave the following statement: *First of all, the meeting of the eight states was successful. It adopted positions that honor us all as Damascus Declaration states. Our solidarity and positions in support of each other where clear. God willing, this solidarity will continue, particularly with regard to joint Arab action, the peace process, and other Arab issues.*

Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, gave a statement in which he said: *We are very happy with this meeting; it was very good and was held in a good atmosphere. Brother Faruq al-Shar's' chairmanship increased the importance of the meeting. He showed genuine brotherhood. We discussed all decisions and issues concerning the eight countries. These issues were highlighted in the final statement. Regarding the Arab joint action document, I believe that it has been a long time since a group of countries have issued an Arab document envisaging a perspective for the future Arab action. We hope the document will be a positive contribution on the part of the eight states for the good of the Arab nation. We look forward to seeing other sisterly Arab countries subscribing to the document.*

Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Butrus-Ghali To Mediate in Yemen-Eritrea Dispute

LD2812210395 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1540 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 28 Dec (KUNA) — UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali paid an inspection visit today to the UNIKOM [UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission] troops stationed in the demilitarized zone separating Kuwait and Iraq. [passage omitted]

In a speech to a column of international troops, Dr. Butrus-Ghali said: "Fifty years ago the founders of the United Nations laid down the basis for an organization to serve mankind, the aim of which was to serve the ideals of peace, justice, human rights, international law, and economic and social development." [passage omitted]

Butrus-Ghali met yesterday with Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, and the first deputy prime minister and foreign minister. [passage omitted]

On the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over Greater Hanish in the Red Sea, Dr. Butrus-Ghali said that he will leave for Sanaa and Asmara tomorrow at the end of his visit to Kuwait, within the framework of his good offices to mediate between the two countries. He denied that his mediation carries any specific proposals; he said: "We cannot interfere; we can exert efforts only with the agreement of both parties." [passage omitted]

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Ethiopia's Zenawi To Continue Mediation Efforts

LD2812133895 Riyadh SPA in English 1303 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 28, SPA — Ethiopian Premier Meles Zenawi arrived in Sanaa on Thursday [28 December] on a visit to Yemen to continue mediation efforts being made by Ethiopia to contain the Yemeni/Eritrean crisis in the aftermath of the Eritrean aggression of the Yemeni island of al-Hanish in the Red Sea.

Zenawi told the Yemeni news agency in a statement upon arrival that what he terms as misunderstanding between the two countries should be settled by peaceful means. He reaffirmed the deep-rooted ties linking between Ethiopia on the one hand and Yemen and Eritrea on the other hand.

Salih Receives Meles, Stresses 'Peaceful Option'

JN2812142995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and brother Major General Vice President 'Abd-Rabbuh Mansur Hadi received Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi today. They discussed developments related to Ethiopia's good offices in the mediation between Yemen and Eritrea to resolve differences resulting from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. They reviewed the outcome of the Ethiopian efforts to bring views closer between Yemen and Eritrea and to resolve the differences [words indistinct] between them.

At the beginning of the meeting, the brother president welcomed the Ethiopian prime minister in his visit to our country. He expressed appreciation for the efforts being exerted by Ethiopia, the friendly, neighboring country, to end the crisis caused by the Eritrean Government's aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. He restated that our country welcomes the Ethiopian mediation and all the good efforts of our brothers and friends to arrive at a peaceful solution to the basic problem. He indicated that our country will give the Ethiopian mediation and all the good efforts being exerted a sufficient opportunity to succeed. He said this stand proceeds from our country's commitment to the peaceful option in resolving the differences with Eritrea and from a sincere desire to maintain the historic relations between the Yemeni and Eritrean peoples and the peace, security, and stability of the Red Sea region.

The brother president reiterated Yemen's call for removing the traces of the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. He said the situation which prevailed before 15 December 1995 must be restored so that peaceful negotiations could start on maritime borders on the basis of international conventions and laws that ensure everybody's legitimate rights.

The meeting was attended by 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani, the prime minister; 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud, member of the speakership committee of the House of Representatives. On the Ethiopian side, the meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, (Mulga Alam Filip), official in charge of the Parliament [title as heard], and the Ethiopian charge d'affaires in Sanaa.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi arrived in Sanaa this morning. The Ethiopian guest was accorded an official welcome at Sanaa International Airport. [passage omitted]

After a brief rest at the VIP lounge, the Ethiopian prime minister made a statement to Yemeni news media in which he said that his visit to Yemen aims to help resolve the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute. He said he believes that the misunderstanding must be resolved peacefully. He stressed the profound relations between Ethiopia on the one hand and Yemen and Eritrea on the other. [passage omitted]

Russian Efforts To Help Resolve Dispute Welcomed

NC2912114395 Paris AFP in English 1128 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 29 (AFP)—Yemen has welcomed a Russian offer to mediate in its conflict with Eritrea over a strategic Red Sea island, a Yemeni official said Friday [29 December].

"Yemen welcomes favourably the good offices of Russia which can play an important role in solving peacefully the conflict because of its friendly relations with Yemen and countries in the region," he told AFP.

He stressed the "safety of international shipping in the Red Sea is important to everybody."

Al-Hanish al-Kabir (Greater Hanish) lies at the mouth of the Red Sea controlling access to busy shipping lanes. It is part of a volcanic archipelago of nine islands which were part of the Ottoman Empire but whose status has never been defined under international conventions.

Eritrean forces captured the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir on December 18 after a three-day battle with Yemeni troops in which nine soldiers were killed.

"Russia is prepared to undertake steps capable of reaching a peaceful solution to the problem," Russian envoy Vladimir Sishov said as he arrived Thursday.

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Ethiopia has also led attempts to mediate but despite high-ranking trips to both Sanaa and Asmara by Ethiopian ministers it has failed to make any progress.

UN secretary general Butrus Butrus-Ghali is also expected Friday in Sanaa to try to resolve the situation.

Asmara has released to the International Committee of the Red Cross 195 Yemeni soldiers captured during the fighting. But has so far refused to accede to a further Yemeni demand to withdraw its troops from al-Hanish al-Kabir.

Instead Eritrea has proposed that both countries should withdraw their troops from the area, and send the matter to international arbitration.

Salih Reasserts Adherence to 'Dialogue'

JN2812210195 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A session of talks lasting approximately two hours was held between brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and His Excellency Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at the Presidential Palace this evening.

They exchanged views and discussed the various aspects of the Ethiopian mediation efforts to resolve differences between Yemen and Eritrea resulting from the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

They also discussed ways to render the Ethiopian mediation a success. This mediation aims to encourage Yemen and Eritrea to hold a dialogue and peaceful negotiations to resolve differences and to end the maritime borders problem between the two countries in accordance with the international charters and laws and in a way that preserves security, stability, and safe international navigation in the Red Sea.

The brother president reasserted Yemen's rejection of using force and its adherence to dialogue and peaceful methods as a sound option to resolve differences between Yemen and Eritrea. He expressed his appreciation for the Ethiopian endeavors and for the good offices of His Excellency Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to bring the Yemeni and Eritrean views closer in the interest of the regional states.

The brother president also pointed to the special historic relations between the Yemeni and Ethiopian peoples. He said that these are deep and fruitful relations of friendship and cooperation.

'Sudanese-Yemeni Brotherhood' Criticizes Eritrea

EA2712151395 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1600 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 26 Dec (SUNA) — The Sudanese-Yemeni Brotherhood League has reaffirmed that the Eritrean aggression against Greater Hanish island was pushed by international colonialism and Zionism, and that it was an overt plan which sought to plunge the region into war, in order to hit national interests and stem the [word indistinct] of Islam in the region.

In a statement issued today, the league said: Israeli support is open in southern Sudan. [Passage indistinct] The statement said the league rejected and condemned the intervention and occupation. The statement warned the colonialist and Zionist backed Eritrean regime to stop playing with fire, because the Yemeni people have learned the way [word indistinct] and the Sudanese people stand firmly by the side of the Yemeni people.

The statement reiterated the need to confront firmly the evil imperialist intervention, which has appeared under the guise of the so-called new world order.

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

WA2012150095

For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the 19 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Terms Visit to Oman 'Successful'

JN2712134695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1225 GMT 27 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza; from "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland a short while ago. President 'Arafat described his talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, during his two-day visit to Oman, as successful and constructive, particularly with regard to opening an Omani legation office to the Palestinian Authority.

Regarding the Israeli occupation forces' withdrawal from the city of Ramallah, President 'Arafat said that the withdrawal is proceeding accurately according to the agreed on timetable.

Commenting on the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks, President 'Arafat said: This is what we were

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looking for, hoped, and sought to achieve by all means so that peace will be comprehensive and fair on all tracks. He added that the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks is a positive sign to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. [passage omitted]

In another development, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-'Id Al Thani, Qatari minister of sport and chairman of the General Authority for Youth and Sports, laid the cornerstone for the first Palestinian sport city in Bayt Lahiyah, north of Gaza, today. Qatar pledged to finance the $30 million-project. [passage omitted]

Decree Increases Legislative Council Seats to 87

JN2812201995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat today issued a presidential decree increasing by four the Legislative Council's seats. The seats will thus number 87 instead of 83.

The four new seats have been distributed as follows:
The city of Jerusalem: one more seat, raising its seats to seven.
The city of Gaza: one more seat, raising its seats to 11.
The Khan Yunus constituency: one more seat, raising its seats to eight.
The Hebron constituency: one more seat, raising its seats to 10.

The presidential decree also sets a date for nomination in these four constituencies. Nomination will begin as of tomorrow and until Sunday evening.

PFLP-GC: Boycotting Elections National Duty

NC2812185695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [General Command] has described the boycott of the elections in Gaza and the occupied West Bank as a national duty.

In a statement published in Beirut today, the front called on all the sons of the Palestinian nation to boycott the elections.

The front maintained that the agreement signed by Yasir 'Arafat's organization with the Zionist entity is designed to entrench the illegal Zionist occupation of Palestine.

The statement declared that armed struggle is the sole method to liberate Palestine and that the bargain agreements will not influence the Palestinian people's determination to attain their objectives.

Palestinian-Israeli Patrols Operate in Hebron

JN2812145195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Joint Palestinian-Israeli patrols started their activities in Hebron today. On the Palestinian side, the patrols were accompanied by Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Fattah al- Ju'aydi, commander of the National Security Forces in the Hebron area, and Colonel Tariq Zayd, director of Hebron Governorate Police. They were also accompanied by Colonel (Gabi), commander of occupation troops in Hebron.

The three commanders visited Palestinian police centers in the governorate and agreed to visit Israeli military sites over the next few days in a bid to boost confidence between the two sides.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Syria Agrees To Discuss Peace Components

TA2812192995 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Washington correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir video report and live report by political correspondent Nisim Mish'al in the studio]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Talks between Israel and Syria continue at the Wye Plantation under a heavy shroud of secrecy. Optimistic tunes about the chances of the talks were heard today in Jerusalem and Damascus. Our Washington correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir reports that the legal advisers of the delegations are meeting separately and may be working on some formulations:

[Begin Ahime'ir recording] The quarantine and the blackout on the content of the talks continues for the second day. Nevertheless, we have learned that Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim, the head of the Syrian delegation, demanded an Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders, whereas the Israeli delegation demanded full peace relations between the two countries. In other words, if Israel and Syria reach a similar or identical perception of peace in their talks here, Israel will in due time be able to announce its recognition of Syria's sovereignty on the Golan Heights either up to the international border or the 4 June 1967 border, which is the bone of contention between the two countries. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Our correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir has this very minute sent us a report that the Israeli and Syrian delegations are now trying to formulate a working paper which U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will apparently take with him to Damascus and Jerusalem

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at the end of the six days of talks. From the partial information arriving in Jerusalem, it appears that the delegations are discussing whether to reach an agreement of principles within four or five months or to go right for a full peace agreement. Our political correspondent Nisim Mish'al reports from our Tel Aviv studio:

[Mish'al] The top political echelon in Jerusalem liked Uri Savir's opening dance with his Syrian counterpart, Walid al- Mu'allim. Based on the reports received from Washington over the last few hours, it emerges that — and I quote — our partners have an open hand and a broad mandate to advance in the negotiations. They listen, react, and do not recite predictable Syrian positions. This is illustrated in the fact that, for the first time in the history of the contacts between the two countries, the head of the Syrian delegation agreed to address the question of the components of peace — normalization with Israel — without first demanding an Israeli commitment to a withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. In other words, the Syrians agreed, even if only theoretically, to discuss their remuneration for a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights without Israel's committing itself to such a withdrawal — which is definitely a new and extraordinary development in the Syrian position.

It should also be pointed out that an attempt will be made during the talks to set a timetable for the continuation of the negotiations. The question on the agenda is whether the countries should try to reach an agreement of principles by April or May 1996 or strive for a full agreement.

And a footnote about the Americans: The U.S. team, under Dennis Ross, has maintained a low profile in the talks and has hardly intervened in the deliberations. Its bridging proposals will probably emerge later on in the process.

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Algeria

Two Opposition Parties Accept Cabinet Role

LD2812151395 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, President Liamine Zeroual has proposed that the three parties that took part in the presidential elections should be included in the new cabinet that is to be appointed at the beginning of the new year, according to the daily LIBERTE in this morning's edition. The parties represented by Mahfoud Nahna and by Nourreddine Boukrouh [Islamic Society Movement, HAMAS, and Party of Algerian Renewal, PRA, respectively] are said to have already accepted the proposal, while Said Saadi's Rally for Culture and Democracy [RCD] is still thinking over its reply, according to the newspaper.

About 1,000 'Penitents' Surrender Since Election

LD2812132495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A representative of the national security general directorate said that the number of penitents who have surrendered to the authorities since the presidential elections has reached about 1,000 persons. Speaking on a Channel 1 television program yesterday, he said that the average number of surrendering penitents has reached ten persons a day. [passage omitted]

Al-Nahdah Movement Official Abducted, Killed

LD2812151895 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Two days ago in eastern Algeria, an official of the al-Nahdah Movement party was found with his throat slit. Abdelhadi Benaissa had been abducted during over the weekend [23-24 December].

FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS2712112095 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 19 Dec 95

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters" in Europe — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Why Allah has not granted victory to Jihad in Algeria yet ?!

One of the most important cause of why victory from Allah is delayed, is when people go astray from the path of Allah. The Jihad in Algeria has not been exempt from mistakes and shortcomings. The Islamists working in the information front have in general avoided the subject not because they had double standard in "weighting" people's actions but because of the junta monopoly on news concerning the military operations and its search for any split within the Islamists camp so it can exploit it fully in its "psychological war".

Lately, the Islamists media and other have all be focused on the murders of Shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderezak Redjam and which most of the observers have imputed them to the Armed Group (GIA). Following is a translation of an article from AR-RIBAT which summarises but not in details, the general very sad felling about the murder of people who have made immense sacrifice in their work for Islam. The title of the article is "That is why was the rejection...": When the announcement of the union was made in May 1994 and many went to congratulating it and to work under its banner, we were amongst the ones who refused to joint it and to follow its convoy. Our refusal was not a result of personnel sensibility or aimed at protecting some interests as was spread by some in order to diminish the credibility of the FIS executive committee overseas. For that, our disagreement with Shaykh Mohamed Said on the subject of the union and the "melting" of the FIS within the Armed Group, was not a despise of his credit in the Islamic work or that of brother Abderazak Redjam's courage during the adversity. Our position was based on true and sound foundations based on Islamic teachings and which are represented by:

— Our knowledge that the tendency of those at the head of the Armed Group is a "Takfiri" (which classify many muslims as unbelievers) directed by the "International Jihad", the author of the "taking advantage of the Afghan Jihad" theory. This tendency has masked itself under the slogan of refusing the elections and with the elections cancelling in January 1992, it found an opportunity to propagate its ideas and sects amongst the FIS youth who was passionate for Jihad.

— The armed Group deviations from the right path have been noticed since the beginning as well as it abuse against many of innocent people, in particular women and the transformation of the struggle against a part of the Algerian people by setting fire to private petrol stations, schools and many others.

— Its principal characteristic through its publication is to declare as unbelievers, symbols of the Islamic work inside and outside Algeria. There is not credibility for a scholar or a preacher unless he is taking their path even if it takes them to eliminate their opponents and adversaries in the field. And this is how the liquidation of Shaykh Bouslimani, brother Titraoui,

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shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui and lately they even went to liquidate those who have joined their ranks but have stated their disagreement on some specific matters such as the case of shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderazak Redjam. This is because of the believe that they are the group of the Right and the "helped assembly" (Taifatu Al Mansura) and all those who disagree with them in any particular point have left the community of Islam (Al Mellaa) and deserves the curse and should be killed badly.

It is because of the above and others that we have refused the union which took place and we saw that it did not fulfil the islamic legal conditions. The killing of Islamic preachers (Daia) is detrimental to the Islamic project and an irreplaceable waste.

And we would like to notify the brothers working in the framework of the FIS that our opposition to the Armed Group orientation, does not mean at all our opposition to the Jihad or Mujahedeen nor our disassociation from them, but we do consider the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) a more genuine framework representative of licit Jihad. The AIS did not perpetrated any crime against the innocent citizens and has built itself quietly and with faithfulness and its ranks are completely tested. The AIS is on a correct faith and a clear political path.

It happens that the FIS has been suffering a great deal because it is confronting two fronts, a military dictatorial regime oppressing our people with "iron and fire" on one hand and a deviationist Group in a Jihad dress and having affected it (Jihad) very negatively. And we do know that if this is not opposed, it is the end of the Islamic project from the Algerian people hearts all together.

Economy: The regimes's interests versus that of Algeria!

The Algerian oil and gas company Sonatrach was about to conclude a big contract with its British counterpart BP [British Petroleum]. The contract is worth $3.5bn of which BP will finance two third of it. The joint venture of Sonatrach-BP concerns the search and exploitation of gas of the Saharan region of Ain Salah that will be transported to Spain via a pipeline across Morocco and the Straits of Gibraltar. The joint venture will have an exclusive license of exploitation for about 20% of Ain Salah region which is about the size of England. The first gas will not be delivered to South of Europe until 2002 or 2003. Oil specialists believe BP's new technology for producing three-dimensional seismic images of underground rock formations is particularly attractive to Sonatrach because it will allow the developers to overcome some of the technical difficulties of tapping the Ain Salah fields.

This is as far as the medium term Algeria's interest is concerned. The project will eventually start to generate profit in about ten years time, that is two presidential mandates. The dictatorial regime in Algeria will hopefully be completely dismantled by then and ALL the Algerians will be the first beneficial of such joint venture.

The signature of such contract was delayed and according to some experts the reasons were extra-economical and extra-technical. They were rather political and came from some circles within the regime which wanted to extract some "added measures" ("mesures d'accompagnement") of a political order. They wanted BP to use its influence to "curb the Islamists's access to the Media in Britain and particularly the voice of the FIS in the Arab press".

While foreign minister Dembri exasperatedly pointed to them last week as " the Arabic "speaking" press of London" and has in the past few years threaten to take "EL HAYAT" to court, the official news agency APS (Algerie Press Service) has been more explicit in a specific statement made few days ago. This organ of propaganda which managers are still the same old "pre-elections" eradicators and whose political track is in "complete out of phase" with the actual situation, has verily reacted to an information published by the London based newspaper "AL SHARQ AL AWSAT" of the 09 of December 95. This information was of the type: "according to some well informed source close to this or that circle and who wishes to remain anonymous". The APS reacted by a "paranoia crisis" accusing the newspaper of being a part of a big war machine against Algeria (understand the Algeria of APS and its like) saying: "It is without any doubt that this newspaper (AL SHARQ AL AWSAT) has become a platform for the Algerian people killers and it is also an integral part of this war machine mobilised against Algeria.". Then APS added in sign of warning and concerning those who are given access to these media, that this access is "TEMPORARY".

In Algeria the cause of the economical bankruptcy has always been the mingling of "politics" in every level of the economical infrastructure. A system characterised by mediocre and incompetent politicians who think of themselves as genius expert in everything and who "boss" with no feedbacks, docile "yes-sir" managers of the economy.

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FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS2812114595 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 25 Dec 95

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters" in Europe — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Editorial: No "Kemal Ataturk" can outlast Islam!

Praise be to Allah Who says: "Fain would they extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, But Allah will not allow but that His light should be perfected, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it)."[Koran Surat At-Tauba, 9:32]

Islam is advancing and with time all the false accusations made against it in the form of negative stereotypes by its enemies particularly those within, are dropping one after the other.

In the country of the notorious anti-Islam personage Ataturk, Islam was requested once more. The Islamists under the banner of the Welfare Party have won the legislative elections of last week despite a fervent opposition from an elite which has turn its back to Islam and an army under the commandment of those who have taken Ataturk as a prophet and do not want to leave politics exclusively to civilians.

So why this popular support? The enemies of Islam say that it is because the Islamists "are taking advantage of the people economical frustrations" and "are channelling the people's anger by doing the easy task of criticising the rulers and making empty promises"!

Here is Turkey, a living example to prove the accusation wrong! The Islamists under the banner of the Welfare Party have been managing the two biggest cities of the country; Ankara and Istanbul where a very satisfactory job has been done according to not only the sympathisers of the Welfare Party but also to its opponents. As in the case of Algeria indeed, it is this "managerial ability" of the Islamists that is most of all feared. It is not because of some miracles that Islamists will come with, but it is the sense of duty to clean all sectors of the economy and administration from all kind of dishonesty. This Islamic obligation has indeed a huge economical dividend that should increase the population wealth greatly at an age where the Ummah's capitals evasion through corruption and theft are of the same scale as its total income.

They are those who have difficulties in accepting the people choice when this choice is Islam. They find "unbelievable" the obvious case of muslims asking to be ruled by the Justice of Islam. Those have surely got a problem. A problem of their own that can not be solved in trying to turn the West (or to the East for that matter) against the Islamist mouvance [sphere of influence] by questioning Islamic values using non-Islamic "scales".

Islam is coming back by popular demand. It is coming to liberate this giant called by Allah "the one Ummah", from everything and everybody that is forcing it to stay sleeping!

Turkish elections: Islam once more!

The Turkish Islamist party, the Welfare Party has won in the legislative elections of last week. The Islamist won with 21.32 per cent of the votes which gives them a total of 158 seats out of a total of 550 seats in the parliament. The Welfare party leader, Necmettin Erbakan said: "the people have chosen the Welfare Party". The army is said to have been watching very closely, having jailed Mr Erbakan for eight months during its last 1980-83 military take over and charged him with "trying to set up an Islamic state". Mr Erbakan was acquitted in 1985. The officer corps purged dozens of suspected Islamist sympathisers from its ranks this month. The Chief of General Staff, Ismail Hakki Karadayi warned before elections: "The Turkish armed forces are the unwavering guardians of Ataturk's nationalism.they have adopted a contemporary, democratic, secular world view, and have always stood against zealotry and reaction". This "military democrat" find it very democratic to impose his views on everybody and to speaks about the political opinion of all the Turkish army troops! The second place went to the Motherland Party with 135 and 19.66 per cent of the votes. The third place went to the actual Prime Minister Mrs Ciller, the True Path Party with 135 seats and 19.20 per cent of the votes.

Crimes in Chechenia: Under international indifference! (An article by Eric Margolis,Courtesy of the GMM).

One of the worst crimes of our time continues in the Caucasus mountains — while the world turns its eyes away. While China is rightly condemned worldwide for its brutal repression of Tibet, and jailing of dissidents, Russia's savagery in Chechenya is utterly ignored. A year ago this month, the Russian Army invaded the tiny mountain republic to crush the attempt by the 1.2 million, mainly Muslim, Chechens to regain their independence after a century and a half of savage Russian colonial rule. At the time, Russian Defense Pavel Grachev boasted he would 'liquidate' the uprising in a few days. What could a few thousand irregular Chechen fighters do against 50,000 Russian troops, backed by armor,

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artillery, helicopter gunships and aircraft? Hadn't the rebellious Caucasian mountaineers learned their lesson when Stalin deported 80% of all Chechens to Siberian concentration camps in 1944? Evidently not. Showing all their legendary courage, ferocity, and tenacity, lightly armed Chechen fighters stopped the Russian Army, troops of the Interior Ministry, and KGB units, in their tracks. Proclaiming a Jihad, or holy war, the Chechen mujihadin defeated Russian tanks and armored fighting vehicles in the streets of the capitol, Grozny, with only Molotov cocktails and hand-held RPG anti-tank rockets. While the western world celebrated Christmas,1994, Russian forces used heavy artillery, massed rocket batteries, and carpet bombing, to grind Grozny and any Chechen village that resisted, to rubble. Over the past year, at least 45,000 Chechens, mainly civilians, have been killed by the Russians. Moscow admits to losing 2,300 soldiers; the true figure is likely above 6,000. Human rights groups accuse the Russians of widespread torture, mass executions, reprisals, and collective punishment in Chechnya. This week, Chechen mujihadin launched fierce attacks on their Russian occupiers aimed at disrupted phony elections staged by Moscow to install a Chechen puppet communist regime, led by Quisling named Zavgayev. Chechen still strongly support their elected president, Gen. Dzhokar Dudayev, who leads the national resistance from the nation's wild southern mountains. Dudayev ousted the communist regime in 1991 in a free election. Though other republics, like Ukraine, Uzbekistan or Lithuania, successfully quit the USSR, not a single nation recognized free Chechenya. It was too remote, too unimportant. Russia was determined to hold on to Chechnya: it controls important oil pipeline running from Azerbaijan. Freedom for Chechenya could break Moscow's hold on the entire strategic Caucasus region. The KGB tried three times to assassinate Gen. Dudayev. When these attempts failed, KGB mounted a covert invasion of Chechenya in summer, 1994, using regular Russian troops masquerading as Chechen. The Russians were humiliatingly routed. Yeltsin's 'Bay of Pigs' cost US $650 million — some of it supplied by western aid donors. Six months later, Moscow openly invaded Chechenya. Chechens are used to Russian invasions. Tsarist Russia first began conquering the Muslim emirates of the Caucasus in the 1830's. The great Chechen leader, Imam Shamil, lead a magnificent, 29-year resistance to Russia's armies. The Chechen were finally overwhelmed by Russian numbers. But they rebelled anew in 1863, during the Polish revolt. In 1877, after which Russia slaughtered 60% of the total population. In 1917, and in 1920. No people anywhere on earth fought so long or hard against tyranny and colonialism as the Chechen — and none has suffered so much. Stalin attempted genocide by sending almost the entire Chechen nation to the Gulag, including the parents of the current leader, Dzhokar Dudayev, and those of the renowned mujihadin commander, Shamil Basaev, a true 'saif ul-Islam' (sword of Islam). A few Chechen survived. Their offspring, the children of the concentration camps, are now fighting Russian rule. Bloody battles raged in Chechenya all this week. Chechen mujihadin seized two major cities and held them against the full might of massed Russian firepower. Moscow poured more troops, tanks, guns and aircraft into Chechnya — so far, to no avail. But how long can a few mountaineers, no matter how valiant and fearless, fight mighty Russia, with 149 million people and the world's second largest ground forces? The world turns its back on Chechenya. President Clinton gave Moscow a free hand in Chechenya, in exchange for Russian acquiescing to the farcical American invasion of Haiti. No one wants to anger Moscow by supporting tiny Chechenya. Not even Islamic nations, who have totally ignored the Jihad in Chechnya. The nearby Turks and Iranians are so frightened by Moscow they dare not supply the Chechen even a few bullets. The Chechen's sole source of arms and supplies are those captured from Russian forces. 'Independent' Georgia and Azerbaijan, to cut off any potential supplies for the mujihadin. Anti-insurgent techniques perfected in Afghanistan, where the Soviets slaughtered 1.5 million people, are being used again in Chechnya. What can the world do? Cut off all financial and technical aid to Moscow. Boycott Russian exports of oil, vodka, and raw materials. Arm the Chechens. Keep denouncing Russian atrocities until Moscow is compelled by world outrage to leave Chechnya just as it was finally forced to quit Afghanistan.

In Chechnya, 'democratic' Boris Yeltsin and his generals are committing crimes worthy of Josef Stalin. The world's silence is shameful and sickening.

Political analysis of the Algerian scene: The last elections or "the regime politics" final destination!

No matter how much time will elapse and how many political manoeuvres and campaigns of disinformation will be staged, the origin of today's Algerian tragedy is the irresponsible act of 11 January 1992 when the army generals decided to nullify the people's free and clear choice made during the elections of December 1991. The generals did not stop there but had launched an unprecedented campaign of terror against the FIS militants and supporters, characterised by mass arrest, torture, deportation to concentration camps in the Sahara desert etc...as a result many Algerians took arms against the army which has let itself to become a partisan institution turned into an oppressive machine at the service of a state terrorism. It will never be enough to

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restate these historical facts so that people can judge the actual situation in its real perspective particularly when many injustices have not and are not being repaired by authorities which pretend to be "New" and have nothing to do with the military coup of January 1992.

The consequence of the Generals having closed all serious alternatives for the people to protect themselves physically never mind asking for their rights, have lead to the legitimate armed struggle. This armed struggle has involved at the beginning, two armed camps: the Junta army insurper of power and the supporter of the Algerian people choice (the FIS). In between the two armed camps, was the population who was in general not actively involved. As is the case in every guerilla war of this type, this population was indeed the "wining trophy" of the battle. The Mujahedeen who have agreed to comply with the FIS political line, would always rather lose the support of the population than use oppressive methods of the Junta aimed at terrorising the Algerian people without any consideration to the boundaries set by Allah in Islam. The Junta secret police "La S.M" with its "malefic professionalism" has had some success in tarnishing the image of Jihad by putting into the Mujahedeen's accounts, repulsive actions against the Algerian people of its own make. It is a bite dishonest to impute all transgressions against innocent Algerian people to the Junta only. Some of those crimes were executed by armed groups under the "Un-Islamic" principle of "the end justifies the means" or by sects which criminally "simplify" the problem by declaring the Algerian people in general as unbelievers against whom "their Jihad" is directed and according to their falsified faith, makes licit what Allah Has declared illicite in terms of muslims's life, wealth, honour etc...

Today, each party in the conflict should have made an appropriate reading of the elections real outcome and therefore have drawn its own conclusions concerning the methods used and the people reactions to them.

Concerning the crimes against the Algerian people, the FIS has always been clear in condemning any unlawful action no matter its authors. To give justice to the Algerian people globally and individually, all crimes against uninvolved civilians must be investigated and their perpetrators brought to Justice. All those who respect the Algerian people should militate for the establishment of an independent commission or body which will investigate every crime with impartiality. For those who have been using the word "justice" excessively as a political slogan but are against such investigation, they will better revise their peculiar and biased sense of "justice". As for those counted in the Islamists camp and who may also oppose such commission, they should "inspect" their faith urgently.

Repeatedly, the regime keeps on asking via the media, the FIS to condemn terrorism. The FIS has always condemn all type of terrorism including its most criminal form; that of the state, all type of crimes including mass killings and extra-judiciary execution of prisoners, all type of physical and moral tortures including those administrated "scientifically". The FIS is an ISLAMIC front and as such has the duty to observe the limits set by Allah to Whom the front is first accountable to before His creatures.

It is rather for the "after-elections" authorities to distance themselves from the military coup of January 1992 by publicly and irrevocably denouncing and condemning it. One can hardly be taken seriously when pretending to have a legitimacy from two mutually exclusive origins: the military coup of January 1992 and the popular elections of November 95.

Going back to the political positions and declarations which seem to emerge from all those involved in the Algerian scene, it is important to note that those who take the opposition readiness in solving the Algerian problem, as a declaration of political defeat, are in fact making the same type of mistake when, last month they declared the armed struggle as finished. Today also, it will be naive to consider the FIS positions as independent of the regime political attitudes or that they are irreversible if the regime persists in its arrogance and misreading of the elections global outcome. As any other political party with self respect, the FIS can only manoeuvre within well defined and immovable limits or "red lines", politically speaking. It is not in the interest of Algeria nor of the "new" authorities to try to "push" it to those limits out of arrogance and/or a false felling of having win a war which is far from finished.

The FIS mistrust toward the regime is a very long story that started since the first day of its formation in 1989. The regime broken its engagements many times vis a vis the FIS. Some of those engagements were made by the highest authorities of the regime. The regime has numerously used dishonest methods of which the mere fact of the FIS leaders still in jail is a living example.

The regime arrogance and uncompromising stand can easily give raise to a situation whereby all political activities of the FIS vis a vis the regime will be declared "frozen" by the FIS itself on the ground of absence of seriousness from the regime to find a political solution. That day, the regime will have to take full responsibility for all the consequences resulting from the only language that will then be left i,e that of weapons in order to reestablish the people rights. The Mujahedeen have proven more than once their ability to adapt their tactics to new situations and have a countless

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alternatives in front of them including that of "hitting where it hurts most" without even shedding a single drop of blood. Pushing them to those options is not in the interest of anyone.

Reading from the regime recent moves and declarations, many observers have concluded that Gen. Zeroual has started a process to tighten his gripes on power not by "an effective rupture from the past" as he has promised the Algerian people, but by changing elements of the system in what has become a classical method in Algeria. This method consists of bringing back to surface officials (principally army-men) who were "ejected" by previous teams in power, in order to counter-balance the powerful opponents of the moment within the system. This battle front is not very apparent to the general public except through founded or not, rumours of clans physically eliminating each other.

Gen. Zeroual is also facing the Algerian political class in a more open battle. A battle which he is doing everything to win it and win it all. Observers have noticed the increasing use of the media to enhance the personality of Gen. Zeroual which have reminded them of the "personality cult" of the seventies. This was seen by some as alarming in terms of future political freedom particularly when nothing has been done since the 16/11/95 to lift the "heavy chaines" or the monopoly on the media.

Other observers have been concentrating on the increase of tension with Morocco concerning the Occidental Sahara. Some are afraid that this "tension build up" will be used to speedily marginalise the political opposition or reduce its standard to that of the Junta made parliament, the so-called CNT.

Time is running and the regime seems to have taken the elections of the 16/11/95 as "a final parking destination" to be identically renewed every five years if nothing serious opposes it.

Egypt

Musa Returns From Damascus, To Brief Mubarak

NC2812190795 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1852 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and his delegation returned to Cairo from Damascus this evening. Musa led Egypt's delegation to the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration countries in the Syrian capital.

On his return, Musa said that he will submit a detailed report to President Husni Mubarak on the results of the meeting and the contacts that he made.

Al-Alfi Urges Arab Countries To Fight 'Terrorism'

NC2812192695 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1748 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has called for the mobilization of Arab efforts to confront the serious phenomenon of terrorism. He urged all Arab countries to adopt a decision in this regard during the Arab Interior Minister's conference which will be held in Tunis on 4 January. He also urged them to issue standard operating procedures for all the Arab security services in the fields of fighting terrorism, extradition of criminals, and the exchange of information about criminals and terrorists.

Al-Alfi said the Egyptian working paper that will be submitted to the Arab Interior Ministers' conference will contain ideas in this regard. He expressed the hope that the conference will issue such standard operating procedures and ask all the Arab security services to adhere to them. [passage omitted]

Al-Alfi said the Arab Interior Minister's conference will discuss the subject of terrorists who seek a status as political refugees in foreign countries. He said the problem of terrorism does not only concern Egypt but all Arab and Islamic countries. [passage omitted]

Al-Jihad Foiled Attempt on Mubarak Motorcade Detailed

NC2812211295 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic
20 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Mahmud al-Hadari]

[FBIS Translated Text] By arresting members of the terrorist al-Jihad Organization who had returned from London and Khartoum, the security forces have foiled the most serious attempt to overthrow the Egyptian Government since President al-Sadat's assassination in 1981. The terrorist plan called for the detonation of two booby-trapped cars rigged with 150-250 kg of explosives while President Husni Mubarak's motorcade was making its way to the People's Assembly in Central Cairo, where the president was to deliver a speech to a joint People's Assembly and Consultative Council session.

The operation also involved plans to send separate teams to besiege and then attack the Cabinet Offices, the Interior Ministry, and the People's Assembly building.

According to investigations by security personnel and information gathered from surveillance of the organization's members, a standby team of terrorists was to wait until the other teams had succeeded in their objectives

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and then attack the television building. The operation's chief aim was to create great tumult in the country and demonstrate the organization's strong presence on the national scene. In preparation for this attack, which was sponsored by the terrorist leader Mustafa Hamzah, who resides in Sudan, the organization sent 86 of its members back to the country over a two-year period. Hamzah arranged some terrorists' travel from London to Egypt and the transportation of others into the country via desert routes in the southwest.

It also came to light that Saudi terrorist billionaire Usamah Bin-Ladin was one of the operation's chief financiers. He supplied funds to buy weapons, explosives, the two booby-trapped cars, three motorcycles, and a pickup truck. 'Uthman Hamid, one of the terrorists involved in the plan, confessed that his own team was to receive $250,000 and another team was to receive a slightly smaller sum.

The security services succeeded in monitoring communications between Muslim Brotherhood [MB] members and the al-Jihad Organization. Khalid Rizq Abu-'Umayrah, a prominent MB member, arranged a meeting between the two sides in a Gulf country—not Saudi Arabia. He also assisted in finding hideouts for some of the organization's members in some Cairo neighborhoods and in other provinces. This assistance was offered after the arrest of MB member Yusuf al-Jundi.

The weapons seized with the organization's members were reportedly brand new.

Investigations also showed that the plans for the operation were drawn up 35 days before the arrests were made. When the security services received the first bits of information, they sent an informer to infiltrate the group members. They were then allowed to enter the country unimpeded. They took up residence in the Cairo and al-Jizah neighborhoods of al-Sharabiyah, al-Haram, and Imbabah, in the village of Kirdasah, in Madinat Sittah Uktubar, and in various other areas in al-Sharqiyah, al-Qalyubiyah, Marsa Matruh, and Alexandria Governorates. Fifty-eight of them were then arrested, particularly in the southwest.

Reports say that some members are now fugitive inside the country and abroad. The authorities asked two European countries and one Asian country to search for 10 members of the organization whose names have been supplied by the detained terrorists Akram al-Sharif, Muhammad Sha'ban, and Nabil 'Abd-al-Rahman.

For the first time ever the Military Prosecutor's Office and the Higher State Security Prosecutor's Office are conducting some of their investigations in concert with each other because the issue has implications touching on the country's very sovereignty.

Diplomatic Source Lauds Eritrea POW Handover

NC2912104695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0930 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—A diplomatic source in Cairo said today that Eritrea's handover of Yemeni prisoners to the Red Cross is a good move. This measure, he added, shows peaceful mediation and efforts have begun to produce good results in resolving the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the Red Sea island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. In his statement, the source expressed hope that these efforts will continue until both parties are brought together at the negotiating table to resolve this dispute and establish stability and security in the vital Red Sea region.

Paper Commends Resumption of Syrian-Israeli Talks

NC2912075095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—Cairo's AL-JUMHURIYAH says that if the current optimism continues, the Syrian-Israeli track, by demonstrating an open mind and a free exchange of views in the new round of talks in the U.S. state of Maryland, will implement the principle of "all the land in return for a comprehensive peace."

In its editorial today, the paper says the progress in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations will contribute to the possibility of holding negotiations on the Lebanese track, which depends on other UN resolutions. The paper notes recent statements by Israeli officials that Tel Aviv does not want any inch of Lebanese territory.

The paper adds that the resumption of Syrian-Israeli talks is regarded as a clear victory for the advocates of peace. It says that keeping the two sides keeping the current negotiations secret reflects a sincere desire to make them succeed, especially in light of optimistic statements that have come out of Damascus and Tel Aviv.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says that the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace will undoubtedly be followed by a new situation in the region dominated by fruitful cooperation and construction for the good of its nations.

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'Arab Action Group' Demands Government Resignation

MM2912090395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Muhammad Salah: "London: Egyptian Opposition Organization Demands the Government's Resignation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — Egyptian oppositionists living in Britain have demanded the resignation of the Egyptian Government. The London-based Arab Action Group [Majmu'at al-'Amal al-'Arabiyah] issued a statement yesterday in which it held the Egyptian Government responsible for the rail disaster caused by two trains colliding in the city of al-Badrashayn last Thursday [21 December], which resulted in some 80 dead and scores of injured. The statement said: "If the Salem Express boat disaster in December 1991, the flooding of the village of Zawiyat 'Abd-al-Qadir in 1992, and the tremendous negligence during the October 1992 earthquake incidents have passed without any member of the government courageously admitting responsibility, it should therefore not seem strange that responsibility for the recent train disaster is attributed to some junior clerks and the victims, with the government remaining as it is, beyond blame and not held accountable. While we offer our condolences to our people for the thousands of these disasters' victims, the 1995 elections will remain the biggest disaster for which our people can accept no condolences."

The statement lauded democratic processes in other states and pointed to "[Algerian] President Liamine Zeroual's success with 61 percent of the vote ahead of a strong opposition, the fall of Poland's President Lech Walesa, founder of the modern Polish state and a man with a history of struggle, the success of the Communist Party in Russia despite the state fighting it, and the success of the Welfare Party in the Turkish elections despite all the wars waged against it by everybody."

Libya

Maghreb Situation Causes al-Qadhdhafi To Cancel Trip

LD2812191695 Tripoli JANA in English 1442 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Statement by the secretary of the General People's Committee for Unity to JANA; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the great al-Fatih revolution was on his way to meet the invitation of Lt. General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, the president of the Republic of Sudan, to participate in the inaugural session of the National Congress in Sudan, whose members were elevated by the Basic People's Congresses, epitomising the historical choice by the Sudanese people for people's authority and its practice through basic people's congresses and people's committees. But the development of recent events in the Arab Maghreb and following the leader's keenness to contribute in containing the development of the situation between the brothers led to the amendment in his scheduled programme.

Morocco

Article Analyzes King's Position on Sahara

96AF0013A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 22 Nov 95 pp 14-16

[Article by Francois Soudan: "A Time of Uncertainties"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *Morocco: In every respect, the king's U.S. visit was a difficult one. There is enough in Washington's attitude on the Sahara to worry Rabat.*

Ever since 6 November, Moroccans have been breathing with a bit less difficulty. In the time it took to deliver a concise and firm speech on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Green March, Hassan II at last appeared to them to be calm once again, almost serene, after a two-week hospital stay in the United States. It is the price that had to be paid for the extreme personalization of power: Morocco's heart had in a way stopped beating, hanging as it was on the laconic communiques coming from New York Hospital.

The ruling class itself, with bated breath, was showing signs of an anguish that the king's words on "the indisposition with which we have been affected" greatly helped dissipate. The fact remains that this shudder, which gave the 6 November speech the appearance of a sovereign retaking psychological control over his kingdom (in it he called in particular for a "new Green March" of minds in 1996), has not resolved the uncertainty, indeed the basic malaise, created by a succession of unforeseen turns of events.

Once again the issue of the Sahara serves as a mirror for Morocco's strengths and weaknesses. There are internal strengths, which draw on the deeply held conviction that, as Hassan II repeated on 6 November, "the Sahara is Moroccan and will remain so, whether people want it or not"; but there are outside weaknesses because, for the past two decades, Moroccan diplomacy and, to a greater degree, communications have been in a way unable to transmit this message beyond the kingdom's borders. So, today, everything is happening as if Morocco, resolved not to be understood and tired of explaining its case, were turning in on itself and on its basic certainties. There was a very perceptible mixture

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of resignation and determination in the royal speech, which for the most part was devoted to the Sahara.

What did Hassan II say? First, that he had spoken in New York with various leading figures (especially U.S.) involved in this conflict, which the international community and in particular the Security Council of the United Nations consider unresolved. He said that he had heard "only good words" on this subject but that he was no fool, since "in politics reading twice is necessary." In a word, he added, "we must not allow ourselves to be surprised." So it was appropriate to be firm: "If the peace plan is not strictly respected, we will no longer want any referendum... we will not play." This risk does indeed exist, the king continued, since some want "to manipulate the plan," for example, "by cutting out one of the prescribed phases." In which case one had to be clear: tell "our adversaries of all stripes...exactly what we want to make them understand" and prepare Moroccan public opinion for the eventuality of "events that will require us to remain mobilized, firm, and resolved for a long time yet to come."

It was a direct message, as can be seen, but it was also fairly sibylline to the ears of many Moroccans who are unaware of its exact context. In truth, the king's U.S. stay in October was a difficult one and not just for reasons of health. The powerful Human Rights Watch organization in fact accompanied this trip with a veritable barrage of fire in the form of two harsh reports. The first, a traditional one, dealt with human rights in Morocco and the second, an ad hoc one, dealt with the Sahara. The latter, published on 20 September in the form of an open letter to the UN Security Council, was written by U.S. investigators working for that nongovernmental organization which had visited Laayoun and Tindouf in August. In it they criticized Moroccan "obstructions" in implementing the process, which is supposed to lead to the referendum, and they asked for a major increase in MINURSO's [UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara] powers. The "comprehensive" responses received by Human Rights Watch from Council members, and in particular from Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador, have proven that there is a worrisome community of analysis for Morocco.

So the conversation the king had in New York with Mrs. Albright (Clinton not being present) took place in a climate with a fairly major chill. For the U.S. Administration, it is not so much the cost of the MINURSO operation ($40 million annually since 1991), which in the last analysis is a modest one, that is causing a problem — since that is irritating Congress only. In the eyes of Washington, which likes to reason by analogy, Rabat's refusal to start direct negotiations with the Saharans is some kind of basic flaw. When they spoke with the Moroccans, just recently the Americans did not refrain from citing as an example to follow the Bosnian-Serb negotiations and the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue! Without making much of an attempt to cover it, they also "advised against" the sovereign's visit to Laayoun scheduled for 6 November — and which was postponed for health reasons; "such an initiative would only have complicated the case a bit more," it was said in Washington.

This general attitude, tied to the activism of certain delegations both within the Security Council (Argentina) and outside it (Spain and, of course, Algeria, which is still as militant on this issue to the extent that the confrontations between the Moroccan and Algerian ambassadors have grown even louder), has some very specific applications, which largely explain the warning issued by Hassan II.

Indeed a major segment of the Council has a very critical view of Morocco's determination to register on the list of voters in the referendum about 100,000 Moroccans of Saharan origin who have been living, in some cases for decades, within the kingdom's internationally recognized borders. The stakes can easily be understood: facing some 40,000 voters registered by the Polisario, these voters, whose thinking has logically been won over to the territory's "Moroccanness," will make the difference in case there is a vote.

So, led by the Americans, these very same Council members, who are pressed to "keep" the date set for the holding of the referendum in Butros-Ghali's last report, which set 1 February 1996 as the start of the process, but who are just as mistrustful of what they believe is an attempt to derail procedures, are trying both to speed up the movement and prevent the huge registration campaign organized by Rabat. They are so pressed that they want to have a codicil added to the peace plan stipulating that only voters with a written identification document supplied by the former Spanish colonial authority will be allowed to vote — a move that amounts to excluding most of the Moroccans of Saharan origin from the list; these latter having only documents issued by Morocco's Ministry of the Interior, or even mere oral evidence.

The panic button, as can be seen, has been hit. And the sometimes threatening tone of the royal speech can be better understood. For all that, did Hassan II erase his fellow citizens' worries as if from a magic slate? This is not certain. Four days later, the palace was indeed announcing another postponement: the postponement of the king's visit to France at the end of November. Even if Paris is publicly keeping a low profile on

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the Sahara issue, it is known that Jacques Chirac is on excellent personal terms with Hassan II and very understanding when it comes to Morocco's ideas. The sovereign had anticipated extending his stay by two to three weeks and thus give the send-off to this "year of Morocco in France," about which people are wondering whether, under these circumstances, it too should be postponed. Last, it is known that France's counterweight is not useless to the kingdom when the climate turns to nonunderstanding with the United States.

So just now you need good eyes to see the reasons for being an optimist. These exist, though, and not only because the heavens, which have finally been kind this mid-November, have dropped the much hoped for rain. The economic association agreement with the European Union is going to be signed, thus settling the nettlesome issue of fishing rights. In particular, people who had thought that in recent months they were seeing a sort of melancholy and a trace of fatigue in the sovereign have been reassured by the determination that he demonstrated on 6 November. Hassan II, weakened, to be sure, by an illness that was more serious than was thought — and for which his Moroccan doctors, who were "guilty" of not having been vigilant enough, have paid the price — and also forced to alter his pace and his life style, nevertheless remains in an undisputed leadership position. The problem, where the Moroccan plane is concerned, lies instead in defining the flight plan and the unusual absence of copilots.

Western Sahara

Abdelaziz Criticizes Butrus-Ghali Voting Proposals

LD2812231895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Saharan President Mohamed Abdelaziz has welcomed the UN Security Council's recent decision rejecting UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali's proposal on simplifying the voter identification procedures.

Mohamed Abdelaziz criticized the UN secretary general's proposal, describing it as biased in favor of Morocco.

[Begin Abdelaziz recording] The secretary general's proposals appear to agree that 135,000 Moroccans should be accepted as voters, because the criteria proposed by the secretary general are based on verbal testimony and lack material evidence with reference to the Spanish authority which administered the region. Second, verbal testimony could be provided by an elder put forward by the Kingdom of Morocco. Consequently, Morocco would determine who would vote in the referendum, including the 135,000 Moroccan previously mentioned.

This idea and point of view is truly biased in favor of Morocco. It is as though Morocco had prepared the proposal which was signed by Butrus-Ghali and then submitted to the UN Security Council in the name of the UN secretary general. [end recording]

President Abdelaziz made it clear that the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] stand has been previously declared: Polisario totally rejects the UN secretary general's proposal, which has been rejected by the UN Security Council.

[Begin Abdelaziz recording] We declared our stand, which is that we cannot be duped by that proposal and we reject it totally, on the basis that it would not lead to a referendum on self-determination of the Saharan people. It would lead to the replacement of the Saharan people by a group of Moroccans who would vote in the referendum on self-determination. Therefore, there was no discussion on the issue of the Saharan people's self-determination, but there was falsification, and the legitimate national rights of the Saharan people were ignored. Consequently, we rejected the proposal completely and declared our stand. We salute the countries and organizations that truly defended our stand and contributed toward saving whatever was left to save of the peace plan and providing a fresh opportunity. [end recording]

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Bahrain

Police Fire on Crowds Protesting Canceled Prayers

NC2912122295 Paris AFP in English 1151 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 29 (AFP)— Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas on Friday [29 December] when clashes erupted in Bahrain after security forces surrounded two Shiite Muslim mosques and banned weekly prayers, opposition figures said.

Riot police tried to disperse the crowds in the two Shiite villages of al-Diraz and Jamrah close to Manama as demonstrators shouted "Allah Akbar" (God is great), the country's main opposition leader Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Amir Jamri told AFP.

But he did not know if there had been any casualties as his home had also been surrounded by security services.

Another opposition leader also contacted by telephone said rallies had been held in several Shiite areas, but he did not know if there had been casualties, stressing riot police had blocked off all roads.

Violence flared in Bahrain in December 1994 after the arrest of a leading Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman. He was deported in January after calling for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975 by the Sunni Muslim-led government.

At least 12 people died in sporadic outbreaks of violence, which lasted until April.

Kuwait

Al-Ahmad Welcomes Damascus Ministers' Statement

LD2812234495 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1945 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 28 Dec (KUNA) — Kuwait tonight expressed its satisfaction with the Damascus Declaration states' absolute support for its demand that Iraq must implement all the UN resolutions concerning its aggression against Kuwait.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said this in a statement to KUNA on his return home after taking part in the 12th session of meetings of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers, who, in their final statement, called on Iraq to implement the UN Security Council resolutions on the Kuwait liberation war.

Shaykh Sabah expressed his pleasure at the collective support he had felt from the declaration member states in backing Kuwait's call stressing that Iraq must implement all the UN resolutions relating to its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Qatar

Paper: Public Opinion Does Not Support GCC

96P50027

[FBIS Editorial Report] Doha AL-SHARQ in Arabic on 8 December on pages 1 and 4 carries articles describing the impact of Qatar's absence from the Gulf Cooperation Council's [GCC] 6 December final meeting on the other five members.

The front page features an editorial by the paper's managing editor, Nasir Muhammad al-'Uthman, under the title "Qatar and the Fair Stance." Al-'Uthman defends the Qatari position and says it was not a "maneuver" or a "deviation from the text and spirit of the basic organization of the Council." While there are ways to convince Qatar to withdraw its candidate for secretary general, according to al-'Uthman, other members of the Council chose not to use them. So, Qatar can either accept the Council's action or take the position it took to "preserve its rights, the credibility of the Council and the equality among its members in rights and duties." Al-'Uthman says: "We wanted to fully exercise our right in the Council and supply it with momentum, getting away from the niceties and hesitation that stopped the execution of most of what the Council and its ministerial committees took from decisions and recommendations."

On page 4, AL-SHARQ excerpts a weekly radio program called "Issues and Opinions." The 7 December program features Hafiz al-Shaykh, a Bahraini writer and journalist, and Dr. Abdallah al-Nafisi, a professor of political science at the University of Kuwait, who takes phone calls from listeners. The main issue discussed is "The Journey of the GCC Countries, Where to?"

Listeners call from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Generally, their comments reflect dissatisfaction with the Council, to the point where one caller suggests that "since there is no benefit from the Council, and we are discussing everywhere the austerity measures that need to be taken, why are we spending so much money on the Council? It would be far better to cancel it and return to each country its contributions to use in its own development process." Another listener complains how a citizen in the Gulf has no outlet for free expression and if "he participated in a demonstration, he would be considered a terrorist."

In response to a question about the rift between the Council and the citizens in the Gulf, al-Shaykh says: "There are two reasons: monopolizing and contempt.

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The official institutions in the six countries of the GCC have monopolized the decisions while practicing a kind of deep contempt towards their people."

Discussing Qatar's boycott of the final meeting of the GCC summit, al-Shaykh says: "It was a good wake-up call to the whole region and a very delayed warning." He goes on to mock the traditional "kiss and make up" official sessions while issues fester and remain unresolved. So it is important "to be warned there are some basic faults to this philosophy."

The paper states that Dr. al-Nafisi thinks the Council is on "its deathbed." According to al-Nafisi, the final communique is very weak because it rehashes old positions on international issues and ignores issues closer to home, such as regional boundary disputes. He says: "This mute nature of the Council should stop at a point because it started to expose us as a people to unlimited dangers." He also objects to the fact that all opposition movements are viewed as the result of extremism and terrorism rather than as "a healthy phenomenon demanding citizens' participation in government, which by all world standards and Islamic shari'ah is a legitimate demand."

Saudi Arabia

Paper Calls Hijacking Attempt 'Terrorist Attack'

NC2812125995 Paris AFP in English
1239 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Dec 28 (AFP)—A hijack attempt carried out Tuesday [28 December] on a Saudi plane was a terrorist attack, a Saudi official newspaper said Thursday, hinting that an unnamed state could be behind it.

The Saudi authorities say an Ethiopian passenger tried to hijack the airliner after it took off from Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, using a letter knife but was overpowered by the crew.

The plane was bound for Addis Ababa with 183 passengers on board.

"The stupid attempt to hijack an airplane which was carried out by an Ethiopian passenger can only be blamed on terrorism," AL- JAZIRAH said.

"The stupid attempt coincided with calls issued by regimes well known for their extremism which have proclaimed their readiness to finance terrorist acts. This coincidence has a meaning," it added, not naming any country.

"These acts must be stopped, whether carried out by individuals or groups, we should get rid of them once and for all."

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Travel Fees Doubled; Direct Calls Abroad Banned

JN2812184295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi authorities have doubled the fees for travel abroad. According to Iraqi travelers arriving in Amman, travel fees have been increased from 200,000 to 400,000 Iraqi dinars. This corresponds to a rise from $80 to $180 [last figure as heard].

According to the same sources, the Baghdad authorities decided to ban direct telephone calls to locations outside of Iraq. These calls now must pass through a telephone operator at the telephone department.

Talabani Voices Support for King Husayn's Plan

NC2812155795 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], yesterday received a delegation from the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] led by Shaykh Abu-'Ali al-Mawla, personal representative of SAIRI Chairman Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim. [passage omitted]

Talabani underlined the importance of relations between the PUK and SAIRI and the need to exchange views on developments in Iraq. He also underlined the need to intensify efforts to topple the Iraqi dictatorship, which recently received a strong blow.

Talabani praised the recent plan by King Husayn of Jordan for the future of Iraq. He called on the SAIRI to study the plan meticulously because it directly deals with the Iraqi issue. He called on the Iraqi forces to respond positively to the Jordanian monarch's attempts and efforts to effect a change in Iraq.

Talabani then reaffirmed the need to consolidate the struggle among all Iraqi forces and factions to overthrow the dictatorial regime in Baghdad and establish a democratic, pluralistic, and federal government in Iraq.

Al-Mawla stressed the need to unite effective forces in the arena of struggle. He expressed the hope that a national program on Iraq's future will be drafted after the overthrow of the dictatorial regime in Baghdad.

Saddam Orders Participation in Water Project

JN2812195295 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn ordered the Iraqis' participation in implementing the "Fulfillment of the Leader's Promise" [wafa' al-qa'id] on the transfer of sweet water to al-Basrah Governorate in recognition of the generous sacrifices of the city of cities.

Comrade 'Abd-al-Baqi 'Abd-al-Karim al-Sa'dun, member the Iraq Command and the official in charge of al-Basrah and Dhi Qar organizations of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY in the governorate that a specialized committee is currently studying the formula of this participation in a manner that realizes the contribution of the citizens of the governorates.

He said this wide popular participation in implementing the project is a new generous noble gesture that has human, patriotic, and educational meanings which show the status of al-Basrah in the hearts of the Iraqis and the pride of leader President Saddam Husayn in the generous sacrifice of the governorate's sons during the second al-Qadisiyah Battle [Iraq-Iran war] and the historic and immortal Mother of the Battles.

The project, started by the cadres of the irrigation, housing, and constructions, and interior ministries, includes the construction of a main 275-km long canal to transfer water from al-Gharraf river in Dhi Qar Governorate to the water reservoirs in Abu Sukhayr area in al-Basrah, and expanding the internal water network to guarantee the flow of 100 million gallons of sweet water a day.

RCC Official Tours Governorates, Urges Grain Growing

JN2912091495

[FBIS Editorial Report] Iraqi papers published in December a report on Revolution Command Council Vice Chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim's tour of the various Iraqi governorates in connection with the grain winter season.

Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic on 10 December publishes on page four a 300-word report datelined Tikrit on 'Izzat Ibrahim's meeting with members of agricultural committees in Salah al-Din Governorate. The paper quotes him as saying: "Providing grain from wheat and barley crops is the principled patriotic and national duty of not only peasants, farmers, and agricultural committees, but also every citizen who breathes the air of this precious homeland." 'Izzat Ibrahim added: "The purpose of this meeting is to ascertain directly what has been achieved by you in the way of serving the agricultural process, and if there are any obstacles harming this process, which is vital for our country and people."

'Izzat Ibrahim affirmed that the government will follow the agricultural process closely "week by week and month by month" to ensure that the country which fed

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45 million people in its past history can feed its present 20-million population. He also affirmed that every inch of land should be exploited to increase production, and that peasants and farmers shall be accountable for their produce and the sale of this produce to the government.

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH on 11 December publishes on page four a 200-word report on 'Izzat Ibrahim's meeting with agricultural committees in Ninawa Governorate. Addressing the committees, he said that "the mean enemies of Iraq who have wagered on the continuation of their unjust blockade" have witnessed "the ability of the Iraqis to give, create, remain patient, endure, and hold firmly day after day to the great aims and principles they believe in." He added that these difficult circumstances will only increase the people's confidence in God and in themselves and belief in their responsibility to make sacrifices in order to break the blockade. 'Izzat Ibrahim called on committee members to devote their lands entirely to growing wheat and barley.

Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic on 12 December publishes on page two a 300-word report on 'Izzat Ibrahim's meeting with agricultural committees in al-Ta'mim Governorate. The paper quotes him as saying that the agricultural committee in every district and subdistrict should follow up on cultivation day by day and submit monthly reports to the Central Committee, especially on wheat, barley, maize, and rice "being basic staples which make the food for our steadfast people." He added: "Overcoming the circumstances we are facing with high morale and confidence is one of the most sensitive and sublime jihadist duties which concern the sincere strugglers of our great people." He pointed out that every effort will be made to provide tractors, pesticides, fertilizers, harvesters, electricity, and pumping machines, "So, there will be no excuse for anyone who does not cultivate and achieve the required productive aims," he concluded.

Paper Reports Farmers' Concerns About Grain Losses

JN2912083295 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Rawiyah Hashim]

[FBIS Translated Text] Diyala Governorate farmers and peasants have proposed to the Ministry of Trade using warehouses in the districts and subdistricts for storing rice from their fields instead of remote silos in order to prevent losses during transportation. In statements to AL-JUMHURIYAH reporter during a tour of the governorate organized by the Ministry of Agriculture to witness marketing operations in Baldaruz District, they said that workers in silos rip open rice bags during unloading making it impossible to use them again, yet they cost a great deal of money. 'Abbas Khashshan, a farmer from Baldaruz District, said that he sold about 325 tonnes of rice to Nahr Sa'd silo so far. He also said that the seeds he gives to the authorities are very good, but the ones he receives — whether for rice, wheat, or barley — are full of impurities. He wondered who was to blame for that.

Dr. Muhammad Mirza, head of Diyala Agricultural Department, has said: The governorate has covered 90 percent of the rice harvest and the season augurs well. He said that the farmers and peasants have exerted great efforts in the campaign to harvest and market rice, especially following the price hikes by the state. He explained that all silos are ready to receive the rice crop from the farmers and peasants as soon as possible without causing any losses. He said that the department has covered large ground in preparing agricultural lands for growing wheat and barley. He also said that the department supplied farmers and peasants with the required quantities of seeds in proportion to their last year's sales.

Column on Failure To Curb Flour Adulterators

JN2912110295 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 3

[Article by Malik Mansur: "Who Protects Flour Adulterators"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The talk about the poor quality of the flour which is distributed to the citizens under the ration card is no longer useful or effective, now that all aspects of the fault and those behind it are known and the methods of adulteration and thievery pursued by bakery owners are exposed. Indeed, the talk about this subject must no longer continue in the same manner and the news media — whether television, radio, or press — must switch to new policies and formulas which will help them take a step forward toward formulating legal and practical solutions to this problem, which is linked to the citizen's livelihood and daily life.

The repetitious talk all this time about the phenomenon of the poor and adulterated flour, and the continued publication of reports in the news media about adulteration and the impurities which find their way to the flour which is offered to the citizens without the competent state organs taking any serious and effective steps to change the present state of affairs, stop the adulteration, and prosecute bakery owners who cause it; we say, this repetitious talk has begun to raise many queries and doubts among the people, such as: Why are the state organs unable to tackle this phenomenon which has become so obvious; a phenomenon which is unanimously

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condemned by the people and which is a cause of concern for the political leadership? Why do bakery owners purposely undermine the credibility of official statements and promises about an imminent radical solution to this complex problem by persisting in their adulteration and thievery?

A long pause at these queries, which keep boggling the minds of the citizens as they look forward to the day when the promised radical solution would materialize so that they could obtain wheat and barley flour without any impurities added to them, has led to doubts and convictions reaching the point of accepting the present status quo grudgingly. The first doubt is about the ability of the state organs to act seriously and firmly enough to deter bakery owners and eliminate adulteration under the threat of applying the penal code in protection of the people's livelihood and in defense of the leadership's policy and concern for the people's interests, rights, health, and life. The second doubt is about the existence of protectors or partners within the state or among influential persons who give cover to bakery owners.

In the face of such queries and doubts, the news media have no choice but to reveal the facts as they are and to sincerely and faithfully convey the people's pulse to the leadership, because a radical and final solution to this phenomenon has become impossible without the intervention of the state leadership, now that the competent organs have failed to confront bakery owners and their supporters who protect their excesses and thievery of the people's livelihood for which the state leadership has exerted enormous efforts to make available to them, help their endurance and resistance, and encourage them to continue the struggle through the last phase of the crossing march.

In order to change this status quo, in which the people stand helpless before these queries and doubts, we have to deal firmly with this phenomenon which is linked to the people's life and health with courage and devotion. The news media must help the state leadership in dealing with the subject once and for all and eliminating the adulteration, adulterators, and those who protect them and provide them with a cover.

It has become obvious to the people through experience and suffering that the foodstuffs which the bakeries force on agents to distribute to every Iraqi family under the ration card, contain strange and cheap substances which are not suitable for human consumption. On the other hand, a sizable quantity of the wheat and barley which the bakers receive from the state is disposed of according to the standards and prices of the commercial market by illegal ways and methods.

Due to the existence of these impurities in the flour, a large number of citizens, especially children and old people, have been exposed to illnesses, especially indigestion. This is why the majority of doctors advise their patients not to eat the bread made from the flour supplied under the ration card due to the existence of impurities, which make it unsuitable for human consumption.

This painful reality means that we are faced with a serious situation and that any slackening leading to its continuation would expose people's health and lives to serious dangers. This shows that making appeals and invoking the patriotism and humanness of bakery owners is no longer effective and that temporary solutions and some kind of formal control can no longer prevent the adulteration and thievery and that the solution demands taking quick, severe, and firm central measures which will remove from the mind of the citizen all the queries and doubts which have accumulated through a long period of suffering. The people's patience, confidence in their leadership, jihadist spirit, and willingness to endure the heavy burdens and hardships of the blockade must not be an excuse for exploitation by the adulterators and the stealers of people's livelihood.

Since no radical solutions have been found for this problem and the queries and doubts which have accumulated with time, certain political, psychological, social, and health effects have developed making it essential to tackle this problem with force, wisdom, and effective formulas and methods which will prevent any harm to the people or their livelihood. The enemies of our country are wagering today on the possibility of the Iraqi people losing patience. They are using every dirty means to increase the burden of the blockade and its direct and indirect effect on the Iraqi citizen's living conditions. Therefore, a radical solution to this unusual phenomenon is considered a national task and an effective counter-measure against the wagers of the enemies of our country and people. This is in addition to the economic steps and measures which the state leadership should take in this direction.

Therefore, we propose the following:

First: Considering the possibility of applying temporary state control on the big productive bakeries until the removal of the emergency conditions and the lifting of the blockade, and working out effective control formulas which will guarantee their efficient management and the quality of their products. The owners of these bakeries shall continue to assume their technical obligations in maintaining the means of production and accountancy and freely disposing of the profits accruing from this work.

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Second: Formulating an integrated control system for medium- size bakeries as follows:

Reliable employees from different state organs shall:

— Receive the bakery's share of wheat and barley and control its stores and production area.

— Control production without interfering with or helping bakery owners give instructions in order to ensure that the wheat and barley are used according to the same specifications as they are received.

— Supervise the process of supplying flour to agents and listening to their complaints and opinions.

— Place a distinct mark on every flour bag which is packed at the bakery.

— The responsibility of bakery owners shall be to ensure the technical, accounting, and administrative aspects of the work without affecting the level and efficacy of the control.

— Other control organs shall undertake the tasks of inspecting selective samples to make sure the flour is clean and free from impurities.

Third: An official and public control system shall be formulated for small-size bakeries which could be as follows:

— Controlling the entrances and exits of bakeries as well as the entry of wheat and barley into the stores and production line.

— Banning the entry of any other materials which have nothing to do with the production and the operation of the bakery.

— Ensuring supervision of work throughout the operational period.

— Control organs shall inspect selective samples to make sure that the flour is clean.

— Bakery owners shall assume all the administrative, technical, and accounting work.

— A distinct mark shall be placed on every flour bag that is prepared for the agents.

Fourth: Penal Measures

— Ensuring that legal measures are taken against bakery owners and that whoever is proven guilty of adulteration should be referred to justice through existing control methods. This is in addition to other penal measures which are the prerogative of the competent official quarters under existing laws and guidelines.

— When a charge of adulteration or thievery is proven, the news media shall report the names of the bakery and its owner, the type of adulteration used, and the legal measures which have been taken.

— A financial fine system shall be introduced to compensate citizens who are harmed as a result of bakery owners adulterating the flour by adding impurities which are unsuitable for human consumption.

Paper on Formation of National Committee for Seeds

JN2812165195 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Yasir al-Mutawalli]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH learned that a national committee for seeds has been formed under the chairmanship of the minister of agriculture. The committee includes the representatives of the Agricultural Affairs Department at the presidential office, al-Iba' Research Center, the Atomic Energy Organization, the Faculty of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

The committee will follow up research on the extraction of the best types of seeds for agricultural crops, propose policies for hiking the prices of seeds, approve a mechanism for distributing seeds to the different agricultural areas, draw up guidelines, approve the policy for imported and exported seeds, and set Iraqi specifications for seeds which are produced locally.

Dr. Naqid 'Abd-al-Rida, director general of the State Enterprise for Checking and Approving Seeds, a unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, announced that the first meeting for introducing the new committee will take place on 28 December.

Citizens Urged To Rationalize Fuel Consumption

JN2912085095 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad — The Oil Ministry represented by its establishments and companies has recently upgraded its campaigns for the maintenance of its refineries and productive units with the view to increasing the flow of products. Ministry adviser Dr. Sami Sharif said that the production of liquid gas during the past three weeks exceeded 4,600 tonnes per day. This quantity, he said, exceeds the local consumption requirement. He affirmed that Iraq has a steady good reserve of all products.

Regarding peddlers and the high prices they charge for gas cylinders, Sharif explained that the ministry continues to watch these peddlers. He called on all quarters: people's councils, party organizations, local administrations, and the citizens to pool their resources

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in order to limit the harm that is being done by trading oil by-products and gas in the black market.

Sharif referred to the huge consumption of liquid gas and gasoline and called upon citizens to rationalize consumption by making best use of these two items, noting that the low prices of oil by-products encourage citizens to waste this energy, such as leaving home ovens on to save on matches. This leads to waste and great harm to the national economy, he concluded.

Medical Congress Discusses Diseases Due to Blockade

JN2912092795 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The 31st Iraqi Medical Congress organized by the Iraqi Doctors Union under the slogan: "Doctors are Always Ready To Help Against the Blockade Crime" began its two-day work yesterday. The congress began with a recitation from the Holy Koran followed by reading of the first surah for the repose of the souls of all martyrs.

Addressing the congress, Health Minister Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak noted that the congress coincides with rejoicing President Saddam Husayn's decision to honor the doctors by granting them Mother of Battles Medallions. He also noted that this generous offer to the medical corp is fresh proof of his excellency's continuous interest in promoting science and the professions to higher levels in all fields in order to render the best health services to the citizens.

The minister added: The continuation of the blockade crime on medicine and food has raised the number of deaths among children under five to 31,327 deaths in 1995, compared to 8,903 deaths in 1990. The number of deaths among children over five has also risen to 50,266, compared to 23,561 in 1990. The number of children born with below average weight has risen by 23 percent this year, compared to an annual average of 4.5 percent before the imposition of the unfair blockade. The average number of patients admitted into the hospitals has dropped by 30 percent.

Dr. Nayif al-Hassuni, dean of Iraqi doctors, delivered a speech in which he said that the convocation of the congress constitutes a form of scientific defiance, a legitimate aspiration for interaction and creativity, and an affirmation of the scientific responsibility assumed by Iraqi doctors in closely and effectively following up the mechanism of work and ensuring the requirements of the current phase which our great Iraqi people are going through.

Speaking on behalf of Iraqi doctors, the dean renewed their pledge to leader President Saddam Husayn that they will proceed forward to achieve more medical gains and consolidate the spirit of steadfastness until the final crossing to the bank of victory and general well-being is attained.

The participants in the congress are discussing studies on health conditions in Baghdad area villages under the blockade, certain types of diseases such as breast cancer and sterility among males, other diseases such as inflammation of the thyroid glands, rheumatism, as well as chest examinations by sonar.

Meanwhile, the minister opened an exhibition of medicines and medical supplies organized with the participation of three Jordanian companies which specialize in the production of medicines and medical instruments.

Baghdad Stock Exchange Market Activity Reported

JN2812164895 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The number of shares traded at the Baghdad Stock Exchange Market in November reached 56,801,200 and the volume of trading amounted to 489,938,642 dinars. A spokesman for the market said that the number of companies registered with the Baghdad Stock Exchange Market has gone up to 88 with the inclusion of the al-Badiyah Company for Public Transport and the trading in its shares. He pointed out that trading in the market is being conducted in eight monthly sessions — that is, at the rate of two sessions a week.

Scientists Restore Laser Tube for Eye Surgery

JN2912095995 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Nada Shawkat]

[FBIS Translated Text] A faulty medical instrument in the days of ease and prosperity would not have been considered a big problem for the medical department which uses it on the patients who need it, since it would have been quickly replaced by importing a new one. However, under the conditions of the embargo, which is affecting our health services, this has become a big problem which Iraqi brains have been trying to resolve through restoration of faulty equipment by depending on their own expertise and locally available materials.

This has been the case with a faulty argon laser tube which is used in eye surgery. The tube was restored by a team of scientists at the Center for Laser Research, a unit of the State Establishment for Research on Space and

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Physics. The team comprised: team leader Dr. Basim Lu'aybi, senior researcher physicist Ahmad Salman Wasfi, chief engineer Fu'ad Taqiy Jawad, chief engineer Najah Mawlud, center director and work supervisor Dr. Falih Hasan Hamzah, and other experts from the center. The team's adviser was Dr. Zaydun Ahmad al-Hafiz.

Several days ago, this reporter watched an experiment in the use of this instrument at Martyr 'Adnan Khayrallah Hospital by Dr.'Umar Najib al-Ya'qubi, an eye specialist, in the presence of three members of the team which restored the instrument. A dialogue took place during that experiment with team leader Dr. Basim, who began by saying: The instrument we restored is an old one. It was imported in 1978 for al-Ramad [Trachoma] Hospital. Its life had expired, because the life of a laser tube ranges from 3 to 5 years, after which it should be replaced by importing a new one. According to bids tendered by foreign firms earlier this year, the cost of importing just this tube, without the complete laser system, would have cost us $45,000.

[Shawkat] How much did the restoration cost?

[Dr. Basim] It cost 750,000 Iraqi dinars without using any imported materials and by depending solely on locally available resources.

[Shawkat] How did you manage to restore life to this tube?

[Dr. Basim] Having obtained the authorization of the Medical Affairs Department at the presidential office, we began restoring life to the glass laser tube by injecting a gas mixture consisting of several gases at different ratios under pressure. The tube was then tested by means of a spectrometer in order to determine the ingredients and ratios of the gas mixture inside the tube. Having established control over all the electronic parts, a process was carried out to generate laser plasma, which is similar to the one produced by a new tube. The experiments and the testing lasted for six months after which the medical instrument became operational with a high degree of stability and an external laser power of 1,500 milliwatts. This was sufficient to treat patients suffering from hemorrhage of the retina. It was tested successfully on several patients at 'Adnan Khayrallah Hospital.

[Shawkat] We also asked Dr. 'Umar Ya'qubi about the medical efficiency of the restored instrument. He said:

[Dr. Ya'qbi] The instrument under discussion is used in the treatment of failure of the retina due to diabetes, blockage of the main retinal vein, or perforations in the retina leading to its failure. It is also used in the treatment of certain malignant or even benign tumors in the retina as well as retinal degeneration due to old age. Now that it has been restored, we have been able for about a month now to use this instrument in treating patients suffering from the above eye diseases. The results have been satisfactory. Restoring 90 percent of the efficiency of such a major instrument is considered a commendable effort by the members of the team.

This rare and brilliant laser surgery reaffirms that Iraqi scientists are ready to overcome any impossibility at the behest of leader Saddam Husayn, may God preserve and protect him.

Paper Reports on Repair of Baghdad Streets

JN2912081995 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad Municipality has completed its first campaign to pave and tarmac streets in both al-Karkh and al-Rusafah parts of Baghdad. Making this announcement, Baghdad Mayor Tahir Muhammad has told Iraqi News Agency that this campaign included the following: Damascus Street, 14 July Street, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir Street, the street linking Museum Square to al-Shawwaf Street, parts of Abu Nuwwas and al-Karradah Streets, and the street linking Damascus Road to the museum and al-Tajnid Street. The mayor said that the work involved 264,053 meters of streets.

The mayor indicated that the campaign also covered locations 651 and 665 in al-Ghazaliyah Quarter, location 697 in al-Bakri Quarter, locations 643, 647, and 649 in al-'Adl Quarter, locations 875, 879, and 885 in Tabuk Quarter, location 891 in al-Jihad Quarter, locations 830, 860, and 846 in al-Hadr, Zubaydah, and al-Khawarnaq Quarters in al-Dawrah area, locations 964 and 966 in al-Diyali Quarter in al-Za'faraniyah area, locations 351 and 357 in al-Mahdi Quarter in al-Sha'b area, and location 733 in al-Amin Quarter in New Baghdad area.

The mayor explained that the second campaign which is now 90 percent finished involves paving and tarmacing the following streets: Khalid Ibn-al-Walid, Port Said, Tunis, al-Nidal, al- Rashid, al-Amin, al-Shawwaf, al-Mansur, and 14 Ramadan. This involved 341,400 meters of streets.

The mayor explained that the second campaign also covers location 679 in al-Furusiyah Quarter, locations 681 and 651 in al-Ghazaliyah area, locations 643 and 647 in al-'Adl area, locations 410, 424, 891, and 875 in al-Salam, al-Hurriyah, al-Jihad, and Tabuk Quarters, locations 825 and 827 in al-Sayyidiyah Quarter, and locations 353, 357, 763, 765, and 767 in al-Mahdi and al-Ma'mun areas.

The mayor added that the campaign also includes leveling 627 manholes in several streets in Baghdad.

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It is noteworthy that the first and second paving campaigns were carried out with the help of the technical and engineering teams of Baghdad Municipality and the capabilities of the municipality's workshops.

Tribal Chief Urges Rectification of Saddam River Course

JN2812201195 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 19 Nov 95 p 6

[Message from Thu'ban al-Khayyun, chief of Bani Asad tribe, to President Saddam Husayn; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yes, yes, to you and nobody else.

Symbol leader, son of the pure Iraqi soil, President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve and protect him.

Yesterday, 10 October 1995, I attended the Euphrates festivities in Dhi Qar along with government officials and other people with a cause to mark the anniversary of that giant, which many kings, rulers, and despots could not tame since 628 A.D. It now flows calmly and proudly to its new destination like a noble stallion mounted by its tamer Saddam Husayn. The youths of Dhi Qar and all those present from different tribes hailed this accomplishment by cheering: Yes, yes to the unique engineer and designer President Saddam, may God preserve and protect him. [passage omitted]

Here is where the dreams have been fulfilled. Here is where conscience has been awakened. Here is where the tongue has uttered the words of thanks to the man who restored stability to his fellow man. Here is where the greatness of Saddam, the generation of Saddam, and the will power of Saddam have been manifested.

Here is where the greatest accomplishments of the greatest projects have coincided and intersected with one another. The Umm al-Ma'arik [Mother of Battles] River, the safety valve and nourisher of arid deserts, has created a state of stability for the first time since the creation of mankind.

As for the Saddam River, its profoundness and effect can only be fathomed and understood by the men of knowledge and scientists. It is an intellectual revolution which evokes many opinions. Had its effect on stability, economy, agriculture, history, bibliography, literature, and divinity been studied, its books would have enriched the libraries.

The Saddam River is the most ideal and worthy means with which the Goddess of goodness has triumphed over the impudence of the Goddess of evil. Indeed, it is not a transporter of salinity as some people claim. Nor is it susceptible to division. As a whole, it is an absorption container for the entire land from its north to its south, if only a simple fault in design could be rectified in its southern course by shifting it to its natural course according to the law of gravity. For, the courses of canals differ from the courses of rivers which always follow depressions. If this fault is rectified, it would be the miracle of the century and it would save millions. Thus the process of coordination between the irrigation and drainage of a dried up land would be achieved. [passage omitted]

Here is where Saddam has triumphed. And, what an unprecedented triumph it is whose effect will be felt by our successors. Thus, we say: Yes and yes to the one who has created the impossible and peace.

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Peres on Talks With Syria, Regional Issues

MM2812144295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Dec 95 p 4

[Interview with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Ruba al-Husari in Jerusalem "hours before the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations near Washington"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Husari] You have recently made statements in which you spoke of positive signals from Damascus, and at the same time Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad spoke of your openness. Is there a realistic tangible basis for these statements, bearing in mind that the negotiations have not started yet?

[Peres] There is nothing wrong with these statements. The tangible basis depends on results. What is tangible is not a basis but a ceiling. The basis is the creation of a suitable atmosphere of understanding after which results would come. We do not begin with a happy ending. We are now at the beginning of the story.

[Al-Husari] Why was such atmosphere not created in the past?

[Peres] I leave it to the historians to determine why that did not happen. For me, going backward is a waste of time. I prefer to concentrate on the future because neither I nor you can change the past. Therefore, there is no point in discussing it.

[Al-Husari] What made you talk about positive signals?

[Peres] For the first time there have been positive reactions from Damascus. I do not want to give the impression that we have solved the problems. Not yet, but we have created an atmosphere that enables us to negotiate. In any negotiations, we first need a partner and then a plan. I believe that we erred in the past because we put the plan before the partner, thus creating a divisive atmosphere because of the different views. It would be wrong to put differences before the creation of a mechanism for reaching agreement. That was the first change we proposed, namely the creation of a possibility for an open exchange of views without preconditions and in an appropriate manner. I appreciate the reactions coming from Damascus and I believe that President al-Asad can play a role that transcends his presidential role in Damascus, in order to turn the negotiations between us and Syria into an endeavor to end the war in the Middle East and to try to bring real peace to the entire region.

[Al-Husari] Some people, especially among U.S. officials, have spoken of a leading role for President al-Asad at the Arab world level. Is that the intention?

[Peres] I do not appoint leaders. I talk about practical leadership, not about the world. It is not for me to say who should lead the Arab world, but as a person living here I am in a position to suggest to al-Asad that he lead a new process.

[Al-Husari] Are you talking about a new process that would open the way for relations with other Arab states?

[Peres] Yes. Our conflict with the Arabs has five centrifugal elements: Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, the Syrians, and the Lebanese. We have achieved peace with Egypt and Jordan and are about to do so with the Palestinians. That leaves two parties, namely Syria and Lebanon. If we manage to establish peace with them there would not be the slightest reason for hostility, threat, or boycott, and I believe that would be an opportunity to put an end to 50 years of hatred and bloodshed.

[Al-Husari] Do you believe that there is a reason for President al-Asad to do that?

[Peres] I believe that al-Asad has his views regarding the region, and so do we. You lead your country but you also live in the region. We are all affected by what happens in the region. I have no doubt whatsoever that President al-Asad can play a greater role in the interest of all peoples.

[Al-Husari] What powers do the Israeli negotiators have in these new rounds?

[Peres] I believe that both delegations are authorized to propose all possible ideas, even before we reach agreement on any issue. I call the current negotiations open negotiations in which the two delegations can exchange proposals and ideas. If we came to the negotiations with all negative proposals, that would mean that we are not negotiating because each side would be insisting on its position. We have said: Let each of us leave the no's in his own country and let us try to see if we can propose new and better positions.

[Al-Husari] What are the red lines in the new ideas which might be proposed?

[Peres] The world is full of red lines. We are trying to create green lines. That is the difference between a politician and a statesman. A politician would steer his policy in accordance with the red lines but a statesman would steer in accordance with green lines or signs. We do not want to stop. We want to open new horizons and create new opportunities.

[Al-Husari] But the Israeli position has so far been one of insistence on early-warning stations, which brought the negotiations to a dead end.

[Peres] I do not agree that that was the real position. I believe that there was some misunderstanding. The

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Israeli side suggested postponement of that issue but the Syrians thought that we had abandoned the issue of land early-warning station. That was a misunderstanding, but I am not responsible for the misunderstanding. Let us leave it at that.

[Al-Husari] Do you believe that Israel still needs early-warning stations on the [Golan] Heights after withdrawal from there?

[Peres] I am not going to negotiate here. These matters should be left to the negotiators.

[Al-Husari] If Syria insists on a return to the 1967 borders, would that take the negotiations back to the old impasse?

[Peres] Everyone can propose what he likes. They could submit such a proposal and we would submit another proposal. We begin from a point on which there is no agreement and on which agreement should be reached. I know that the Syrians do not agree with us and I know on what we disagree with them, but I am not prepared to leap forward and make preconditions. We do not need that.

[Al-Husari] You portray the situation as one with no red lines and with everything negotiable.

[Peres] Yes, the red lines should be left to the end of the negotiations not the beginning. If we create red lines from now it would mean that we are not about to negotiate. At the end we will see where to place them.

[Al-Husari] An Israeli position with no red lines might cause the Israeli opposition some concern. Are you not worried about that?

[Peres] As we have not reached agreement and have not committed ourselves to anything, why should they be concerned? Should mere talk worry them? They worried all the time as we embarked on Oslo I and then Oslo II, and look what happened. There is always a difference between the beginning and end of negotiations with everyone coming out satisfied. The proof is that today I know of no Israeli who wishes to return to Gaza. On the other side the Palestinians were always suspicious of our intentions. When we said "Gaza first" they did not believe us and began speaking of "Gaza last," but what did happen was that when we completed the "Gaza first" process we continued to honor our commitment exactly as we said. I believe that the Syrians and the Lebanese now know that when we make a commitment we honor it. We are ready to start even when there are differences, otherwise we would never start. We should be judged by the final results not the beginnings. I hope that the final results will be satisfactory to everyone.

[Al-Husari] How do you envisage relations between Syria and Israel once agreement is reached?

[Peres] I envisage a situation of full peace and a modern economy that serves all parties. There are still some people in the Arab world who say that Israel wants to control the region's economy. That is not true, because in these modern times there is no such thing as control of the economy. There is competition. The real colonialism now is one which comes from within not from abroad. If you appoint someone to impose his will on the economy, that would kill it. They should therefore free themselves from all [such] ideas just as they have liberated themselves from the old empires. Empires of prejudgement are sometimes worse than empires of power.

When we began talking about a new Middle East I gave Europe as an example. I can now give another example, namely Asia and what is taking place there. We now see some states lagging behind economically and politically. Let us observe what is happening there. The best economy now is the Asian economy. I therefore wonder: Why should that not happen here? I see no reason why the Middle East cannot become like Asia, not to say Europe. Perhaps my mistake was that I talked about a new Middle East when I should probably have talked about a Middle East in a new phase. What I say is this: Gentlemen, if you want to modernize your economy and if you want to join the competition, you should do so, otherwise you will remain in the rear.

[Al-Husari] You have mentioned full peace. What are the components of such peace?

[Peres] We only have to observe the nature of relations between Israel and Jordan to discern the components of peace. Before your arrival I had with me the mayor of Kfar Saba, which is a few kilometers from Qalqilya. He spoke to me about his concern about abandoning Qalqilya to the Palestinian police and about the need to build a fence or a number of fences. I said to him: Try something else such as relations between one people and another and, as you have met the mayor of Qalqilya, try to suggest to him that youths from both camps meet and talk to one another like human beings. Peace means that we should use lips instead of guns, to talk to one another. We are not seeking economic favors from Syria. Our economy is good and we do not need that. What we need is peace not only between Israel and Syria but peace throughout the entire region. If we want to develop tourism, a tourist should be able to cross from one area to another without fear or anxiety. That applies not only to tourists but also to pilgrims. People should be able to make pilgrimage to the house of God without any restrictions or control and without security

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men. That is what peace is all about. I did not invent it. If Syria wants to develop tourism, the sources of water or electricity, or trade, all these are regional issues which cannot happen within the national economy as was the case a hundred years ago. It can, as a nation, participate in a world economy which has different requirements.

[Al-Husari] Reconciliation between states is different from reconciliation between peoples. Do you believe that the Arab peoples are now ready to recognize you as part of this region?

[Peres] We do not need any recognition because we are alive. And we are recognized. Who can deny us recognition? Nobody gave us recognition as a gift. I do not ask anyone to recognize us but I ask all states only to recognize peace. It is the value of peace that requires recognition, and not only for us but for them too. Israel has lived 50 years without recognition and it can continue its life. The reason that there was no recognition was the fact that there was hostility, wars, and hatred. We cannot have both war and peace at the same time.

[Al-Husari] There has recently been much talk in Israel about a defense pact between Israel and the United States. Views have differed on that. Under what circumstances would such a pact be possible?

[Peres] I believe that it should be discussed but not as a precondition for anything. Ultimately what I would like to see is a community of all states, including the United States, standing together against the threat of extremist movements and against terrorism. What we are going through in the Middle East is a transition from a state of hostility to a state of risks. Hostilities occur but risks are worldwide or regional, and I would like to see a regional charter that addresses not enemies but the terrorism facing everyone of us from groups which undermine stability, groups which belong in the past. Perhaps in the future we could have a Middle East free from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. Here I draw a distinction between enemies and dangers. What I propose is a Middle East free from enemies and united against the common dangers. I am not suggesting that an Arab state should fight for us or we should fight for it, but I do suggest that we work together against any common threat facing us, be it terrorism, drought, drugs, or pollution.

[Al-Husari] Some days ago you mentioned giving up nuclear weapons if peace is achieved. What kind of peace would make Israel give up its nuclear weapons?

[Peres] A peace embodying all states including the dangerous states, which today are Iran, Iraq, and Libya.

[Al-Husari] Will it be Israel's aim to have peace with these states after concluding peace agreements with its immediate neighbors?

[Peres] Yes, but Iraq's enemy is Iraqi, it is not Israel, Iran's enemy is a policy not a state, and Libya's problem is Libya itself not what is outside it.

[Al-Husari] Uri Savir, director general of the foreign ministry, has mentioned the possibility of a summit meeting between you and President Hafiz al-Asad within three or four months. Does that seem reasonable to you?

[Peres] Savir is usually a balanced person. I am not sure that he did actually say that, but anything is possible. I have had long experience in negotiation and therefore I will not indulge in guesswork. Experience has proved to me that there is no such thing as difficult situations, just difficult individuals. That is why I believe that the first task in the negotiations is finding a partner. That is what we are trying to do, create some trust, understanding, and openness. I believe that there is a need for high-level meetings because each one of us has to convince his people that this is serious. But I do not make that a condition, just as I do not make anything else a condition.

[Al-Husari] When will it be Lebanon's turn to resume negotiations with you?

[Peres] I believe that when we make some progress with Syria, Lebanon will be next. We are not playing a political game in Lebanon. The measure of Lebanese independence is, first and last, a Lebanese affair, not something dictated by Israel.

[Al-Husari] You have played a major part in the attempt to draw the Gulf states toward establishing diplomatic relations with Israel but nothing of what you were after has so far been achieved. Some might say that you have failed in that.

[Peres] Every success comes from a road fraught with failure. There are always difficulties, but there is no reason why we should have differences with the Gulf states. Differences about what? A start has been made, and I believe the matter will take more time and we will and, rather, they will achieve that and we will have normal relations at the appropriate time.

[Al-Husari] Which country is next in line for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel?

[Peres] Any answer I give would be immediately denied. So I will not mention any.

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Press Reviews Progress in Wye Plantation Talks

TA2912083795

[FBIS Editorial Report] All Israeli dailies on 29 December carry front-page reports on last night's round of talks between Israeli and Syrian delegations at Wye Plantation in Maryland, by their correspondents on the scene.

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew carries a 500-word report by Shim'on Schiffer and Hayim Shibi on pages 1 and 8 saying that "the first Israeli-Syrian 'formulation team' has been established at the Wye Plantation talks. The team is made up of the jurists on both delegations, Foreign Ministry Legal Adviser Yo'el Singer, and his Syrian counterpart Riyad Dahudi.

"Singer and Dahudi yesterday held a round of talks apart from the 10-member plenum. The session of the jurists expresses the beginning of an effort to work out the initial framework principles for the negotiations. The session of the two jurists was attended by Aaron Miller, a member of the U.S. delegation."

"Our correspondent has learned that for the first time since the Israeli-Syrian negotiations started four years ago, the delegations discussed a hypothetical question raised by the Israelis: Suppose Israel accepts the Syrian territorial demand (that is, to return the entire Golan Heights — Shim'on Schiffer); what will it get in return from Syria in terms of the substance of peace?'"

"Knowledgeable sources in Washington said that the Syrians answered this question in great detail.

"Israeli sources said that if things proceed at the present rate there is a good chance that as soon as next month — after the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Christopher to the region — Israel and Syria will commence talks in the framework of work teams discussing all aspects of a bilateral arrangement.

"The Americans believe that if the positive trend that marked the beginning of the talks is preserved, it will be possible to attain a declaration of principles for an arrangement between Israel and Syria by the end of spring 1996.

"The Israeli delegation proposed to remove the talks from the United States to an agreed location closer to Israel and Syria. The Israelis suggest conducting the negotiations at a U.S. Army base in Europe, something that will enable the delegations to preserve closer contacts with their heads of state."

Correspondent Ilana Baum adds to the same report that "Jerusalem has received optimistic reports about the Wye Plantation talks.

"The reports indicate the sides are dealing with substantive and not merely procedural issues, although at this stage most of these substantive discussions are being held in informal meetings.

"The issues being dealt with include the substance of normalization, the border issue, the water problem, and the security arrangements. It has already been acknowledged that normalization entails the opening of mutual embassies.

"Minister Yosi Beilin yesterday expressed satisfaction about the talks with Syria. He believes that within weeks or several months at most we will know whether we have achieved a breakthrough with Syria.

"'This is the first time that the Syrians are showing a willingness to hold a dialogue with us. They are no longer playing the game of not agreeing to drink coffee with us during breaks and not smiling at us. I would not call it a major turnaround, but it does constitute a change,' Beilin said."

In a 300-word report on pages 1 and 2 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew, Avino'am Bar-Yosef, Ben Kaspit, and Hemi Shalev write: "Israeli and U.S. officials participating in the Wye Plantation talks are encouraged by the interest shown by Syria in regional cooperation projects."

Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew includes 600-word report on page A1 and A10 by 'Aqiva Eldar adding: "Parallel to the talks with Syria, Israel and the United States are trying to work out a tempting 'security package' that will make it easier for the government to sell to the public a withdrawal from the Golan Heights, as well as to come up with sophisticated early warning measures which would replace the ground early warning stations."

Referring to the same issue, the above MA'ARIV report adds: "Among the points being considered with the United States are the following: " — A Syrian commitment not to divert water resources in the wake of an Israeli withdrawal. " — Using J-Stars spy planes and balloon early warning systems on the Israeli-Syrian border. " — Regional projects such as water projects and new roads. " — Joint management of projects such as vineyards on the Golan Heights and tourism projects in the area northeast of Lake Tiberias."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 29 December adds: "Israeli sources say the heads of the Israeli delegation, Uri Savir and Itamar Rabinovich, are considering a change in the original plan and might cancel their return to Israel tomorrow night for consultations. They say that instead the two delegations

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might resume the second round of talks next week earlier than scheduled."

'Sources' Doubt U.S. Mediators' Motivations 'Pure'

TA2912112695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Dec 95 p B3

[Commentary by 'Uzi Benziman: "Personal Ambition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fact that members of the American team attending the Israeli-Syrian negotiations have personal ambitions to succeed deserves our attention. Knowledgeable sources in Jerusalem maintain that this element was not considered seriously enough when the prime minister decided to expand the role of the American mediator and allow him to present compromise offers.

According to this concept, several American officials have for the past 10 years been busy establishing peace between Israel and its neighbors. So far, they do not have many achievements to show: They read about the Israeli-Palestinian agreement in the newspapers, and were briefed in a hasty telephone call about the Israeli-Jordanian agreement only after it was concluded. According to this version, the American mediators have developed a strong personal ambition to return home successful, and to lay a U.S.-made Middle East peace on the White House doorstep.

Those who hold this view, and who have been closely attending the American activities in the region, fear that personal motivations will, to a large extent, cast a shadow on the reasoning of the American mediators and that Israel will be asked to pay the price to satisfy them. This description is based on the assumption that most of the tradable goods in the negotiations with Syria (the Golan Heights) are in the hands of Israel, which is why the Americans will pressure mainly it. According to the rules of the game and the framework of the negotiations so far, the American mediator played a limited role, hence its ability to pressure both parties was limited. Now, however, the prime minister has opened the door wide for active American intervention in the negotiations.

These fears reflect not only a lack of confidence that the American mediators' motives are pure, but also that there is pessimism regarding the ability of the government and its head to withstand their pressures.

Baraq: Nuclear Position 'Will Not Change'

TA2912122695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says Israel's position on the nuclear issue has not changed, will not change, and cannot change. He said this position is not a matter for tactics and politics, rather a fundamental position dealing with a matter of existence and stems from responsibility for Israeli citizens in this and future generations.

Qahalani Addresses Rally, Sends Letter to Clinton

TA2812115395 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by David Rudge]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Third Way leader Avigdor Qahalani yesterday called on US President Bill Clinton not to press for a peace that, in the long term, would only encourage further wars against a weakened Israel.

In a fiery speech to more than 2,000 Golan Heights residents in Qatzrin last night, Qahalani also vowed to resign as deputy mayor of Tel Aviv to devote all his time and energy to the fight to keep the Golan under Israeli rule.

The plea to Clinton was contained in a letter to him.

"Numerous US generals and other security experts have said nothing can defend Israel in peace better then Israel's presence on the Golan," the letter reads.

"Your friend and our late prime minister, Yitzhaq Rabin, stated that it is inconceivable that even in peace we should leave the Golan, and whoever proposes doing so would abandon national security.

"We who have seen the ravages of war are deeply committed to the pursuit of a lasting peace. However, peace is only obtainable if Israel's security is not compromised.

"As president, you have shown a deep commitment not only to the peace process, but to the nation of Israel. For this, we are profoundly grateful and therefore we ask you not to press for a precipitous peace that in the long run would only encourage further wars against a weakened Israel," the letter read.

The Third Way held an emergency council meeting on the Golan last night and vowed to do all in its power to support residents of the Heights in their fight for "peace with the Golan," and against the destruction of their communities.

Golan Residents Committee members stressed that the battle to achieve peace with the Golan is now beginning in earnest and a wide range of activities is planned, including a demonstration today opposite the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv.

Leaders of the National Religious Party also visited the Golan yesterday in a show of solidarity with residents.

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MK [Knesset member] Zvulun Hammer said the party would submit a bill which, if approved, would prevent the evacuation of any settlements.

Despite the defiant atmosphere in Qatzrin, there are signs the atmosphere on the Golan has changed, and banners have suddenly sprung up in favor of a peace treaty with Syria — even at the expense of withdrawal.

Some residents said they intend to hold a counter rally in support of peace with Syria, even if it means full withdrawal. [passage omitted]

Peres: IAF Procures 'Most Advanced' Missile

TA2912103895 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Dec 95 p A10

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, revealed yesterday that last year the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] procured an air-to-air missile, manufactured by REFA'EL [Armament Development Authority], which apparently is the most advanced of its kind in the West. Peres made the remark at a ceremony marking the end of a pilots training course at the Israeli Air Force [IAF] base at Hazerim.

The prime minister added that the IAF, like the entire Army, last year received a significant addition to its power in the form of fighter planes, helicopters, and sophisticated guidance equipment. "The IAF will remain what it has been: the military arm that can reach the farthest, the highest, and attain operational ability that provides the entire military system with much flexibility," he said.

"While negotiating peace, we are often asked: What do you rely on? And we say: We rely on our ability to defend peace, just as we were able to defend the security of the State of Israel. We count on our IAF, and we count on you, graduates, to add strength to the force," Peres noted. [passage omitted]

'Ivri Urges Deterrence on 'Second Strike Capacity'

TA2712125095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Dec 95 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri says that Israel should develop a strategic deterrent force based on a "second strike capacity;" in other words, the ability to inflict serious damage to any country attacking Israel with surface-to-surface missiles.

'Ivri was interviewed by BIT'ON HEYL HA'AVIR on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Gulf war. He said that this war had shown that it was possible to launch a sudden attack with surface-to-surface missiles. "On the face of it, this would be very simple. It could be relatively easy for a country with which we do not share a common border to launch a sudden war without mobilizing troops or penetrating our territory. It could make all the preparations for the launch in secret and fire the missiles at us whenever it sees fit."

According to 'Ivri, "the best response against such a scenario is to develop a deterrent force that makes the other side abstain from a sudden attack. Whoever planned to launch a sudden attack with surface-to-surface missiles would know that if it does not destroy all our offensive capability in such an attack, the response would be a huge strike from which it will not recover."

'Ivri cited as an example the "second strike capacity" concept whereby the United States would be able to destroy the Soviet Union even if the latter suddenly attacked it with nuclear missiles.

According to 'Ivri, "the deterrent force must be built in such a way as to persuade the other side that if it launches such an attack, it would find the reprisal intolerable. The goal today is to build the possibility to destroy the missile launchers on the one hand, and create the initial operational capacity to deal an effective counterattack on the other." In his opinion, "we will not always be able to prevent an attack on us, but we must create a certain deterrent dimension based on a real operational ability that will cause the other side intolerable damage."

'Ivri added that the development of the Arrow antiballistic missile is meant to attain an operational defensive capacity against a sudden strike, which will give Israel the offensive ability. "That is where the answer lies, not in the defense," he said.

Referring to the Ofeq reconnaissance satellite, 'Ivri said that "satellites are a very serious factor, particularly in times of peace. Whereas in times of war one can dare dispatch surveillance aircraft, tools must be built in times of peace which do not contravene treaties and agreements with other countries and which enable the gathering of intelligence to monitor what is going on. Satellites are one of the solutions."

Ministers Against Release of Palestinian Prisoners

TA2812122195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel reiterated to the Palestinians that it will not release prisoners who have murdered or wounded people in Israel. In a meeting at the Knesset

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with Ministers David Liba'i and Yosi Sarid, the members of the Palestinian committee for the release of prisoners asked to increase the number of prisoners slated to be released beyond what was agreed on in the Oslo Accords.

Our legal affairs correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that the two ministers reiterated that Israel will act only on the basis of the accords. An additional meeting will be held on the issue next week. The joint Israeli-Palestinian legal committee will convene at the Erez checkpoint to discuss Israel's extradition requests.

IDF 'Satisfied' With Palestinian Police Performance

TA2812195295 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Qobi Marenko video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Upon the completion of the first stage of the redeployment in the territories, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers are satisfied with the performance of the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the police force under its command.

Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of activities in the territories, said today that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] halted the terrorist attacks to enable the IDF to complete the redeployment and that the question is what will happen now that the redeployment is nearing its end. Here is a report by our correspondent Qobi Marenko:

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] [Marenko] Contrary to the document published yesterday mocking the performance of the Palestinian Police, the IDF is rather pleased with it. We were told that the PA successfully passed its first two tests: the orderly transfer of the area and the relatively smooth operation of the joint patrols in most of the evacuated cities.

[Shahor] The result at this stage is that the area is relatively quiet. In my opinion, Hamas realizes that quiet is the best way of dealing with the upcoming elections and the process of handing over territory.

[Marenko] The IDF will not predict how long the quiet will last. The real test of the PA's maturity will be in the first security-related incident — that is, mainly in its ability to prevent it. [end recording]

Increase in West Bank GDP Reported

TA2812162195 Jerusalem Government Press Office in English 28 Dec 95

[Report by the GPO economics desk]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The GDP [gross domestic product] of Judaea and Samaria rose by an annual rate of 15% during 1993 and 1994, compared to 1991 and 1992, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported. The increase was mostly due to an increase in the construction sector and expansion of the industrial base. The value of the area's GDP — the net value of services and goods produced within Judaea and Samaria — equalled 3% of Israel's GDP; taking into account buying power differences, it equalled 5% of Israel's GDP. With additional revenues received from Palestinians working within Israel and transfers from abroad, the GDP in Judaea and Samaria rose by 10% during 1993 and 1994 compared to 1991 and 1992. The reason for this being lower is that fewer Palestinians from Judaea and Samaria worked in Israel in 1993 and 1994, compared to 1991 and 1992. From the second quarter in 1994, statistics from the Jericho area were not included due to the beginning of its inclusion in the Palestinian Authority.

Levi Criticizes Netanyahu as Associates Leave Party

TA2912070995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 29 Dec 95 pp 1, 22

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Likud scored a double coup yesterday — former GSS [General Security Service] deputy chief Gid'on 'Ezra and Qiryat Shemona Mayor Prosper 'Azran are both running in its Knesset primaries.

'Ezra's decision is seen as a special feather in the Likud cap, as he serves as special consultant on terrorism to Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal. Since the Rabin assassination, 'Ezra has been frequently mentioned as a possible successor to the present GSS head.

'Ezra handed in the candidacy forms after the Tuesday evening deadline, with the special permission of Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu.

'Azran is reported to have already submitted his candidacy forms to Likud headquarters. His move marks another major defection from the camp of MK [Knesset member] David Levi. [passage omitted]

Shahal wished 'Ezra success and praised him "as one of the country's best."

Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu also scored a success by wooing 'Azran away from the Levi movement. Earlier in the week, he had similarly attracted Dimona Mayor Gabi Lalouche. Both had been among Levi's closest associates. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu, however, rejected the candidacy of former independent MK Shmu'el Flatto-Sharon, who also tried

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to throw his hat in the Likud primary ring. Netanyahu seized on a technicality to reject his candidacy.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 29 December adds: "MK David Levi is determined to run on an independent list in the upcoming elections. David Levi told Qol Yisra'el that the Likud's way is no longer his way and that the Likud leadership does not represent him. As for the return to the Likud of two of his people — Gabi Lalouche and Prosper 'Azran — David Levi says they can do whatever they want to do. He emphasized that he is not concerned about those who defected from his movement back to the Likud and that he is not searching for stars and generals. David Levi criticized Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu, saying that he is now trying to lure back persons who in the past he has rejected and labeled as ethnic minority leaders who use their origins for winning leftovers. Now he is crawling in their direction in a dubious manner."]

Ben-Eli'ezer To Use U.S. Funds for Labor Plan

TA2912113295 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 29 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Shalom Yerushalmi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer is initiating a broad Israeli-Palestinian plan that will ensure Labor's victory in the 1996 elections.

According to the plan, 'Arafat will impose a voluntary closure on the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas until the Israeli elections at the end of October 1996. The plan stipulates that during this period no Palestinian may enter Israel — which means there will be no terrorist attacks against the civilian population inside Israel. Ben-Eli'ezer believes that the calm and personal security will help Labor remain in power after the elections. In exchange for his agreement, Ben-Eli'ezer offers 'Arafat $250 million as compensation for losses accrued by the PA. These funds will be transferred from Israeli and U.S. funds.

Ben-Eli'ezer also proposes to step up negotiations over the permanent arrangements. "If 'Arafat accepts my plan he stands to gain twice," Ben-Eli'ezer told MA'ARIV. "Labor is the only party that can guarantee the continuation of the policy agreed upon in Oslo during the permanent arrangements stage."

[The same MA'ARIV edition includes an interview with Ben-Eli'ezer by Shalom Yerushalmi on page 8 of the SHABAT supplement, in which the minister is quoted as saying: "We will reach an agreement with Yasir 'Arafat according to which he will not allow any Palestinian to enter Israel during the next 10 months. By way of financial compensation we will transfer to him $250 million from U.S. funds. Consequently there will be no terror attacks until the elections, we will score a big victory, and this in return will give 'Arafat a big advantage in anticipation of the permanent arrangement, a thing which will also coincide with our interests."]

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Al-Kabariti on Attempts To Free Prisoners in Iraq

JN2812110395 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Dec 95 pp 1,17

[Report by Tariq al-Mawmani]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has stated that the Jordanian citizens covered under the presidential amnesty in Iraq are still in Iraqi prisons and have not been released.

Al-Kabariti said that there are more than 700 Jordanians who are either detained, imprisoned, or missing in Iraq. He said there have been contacts with Iraq to seek the release of 570.

Al-Kabariti said this at a session the House of Representatives held yesterday. He said there is a great disparity between the actual number of detainees and the list the Iraqi side has submitted.

The House of Representatives met yesterday under Speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur and the presence of Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and ministers. The written reply by Foreign Minister al- Kabariti was read at the session in response to House of Representatives Member Dr. Dhib 'Abdallah's question on the Foreign Ministry's efforts to seek the release of Jordanian detainees in Iraqi prisons, since other Arab and foreign nationals have been released.

The minister said that the ministry is doing its best to release the others. He said that the ministry has asked Iraq to provide it with a new list of those detained and convicted. He said: The only names we received are those of 57 prisoners in the Abu-Ghurayb prison, all of whom were sentenced to prison terms varying from one to 20 years and to life imprisonment on charges of robbery, murder, espionage, money counterfeiting, and smuggling. [passage omitted]

Contacts With Iraq To Contain Tension Intensify

JN2812163195 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 28 Dec 95 pp 1, 14

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR AL-USBU' learned that the Jordanian and Iraqi Governments have intensified their contacts at the highest levels over the past days to prevent the escalation of tension in bilateral relations in light of Jordan's intention to host a conference that the Iraqi opposition intends to hold in Amman in the first half of next month.

The conference is due to discuss a new strategy for government in Iraq based on democracy, political pluralism, respect for human rights, and unity of Iraqi people and land, and within the framework of applying the principle of social justice and equality of chances for all main sects in Iraq.

It was learned that a ranking Iraqi official conveyed an oral message from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn on bilateral relations and their future, Iraq's eagerness to bolster its relations with Jordan, and Iraq's readiness to support Jordan politically and economically when the siege is over and to open Iraqi markets to Jordanian businessmen and Iraqi universities to Jordanian students to study there free of charge.

The Iraqi envoy hinted that the Iraqi Government will give priority to Jordan in the projects of reconstruction of Iraq after the end of the siege, which is something that means absorbing the unemployed in Jordan fully and opening the way for Jordanian companies to work in Iraq.

Jordan replied to the offer by sending a ranking Jordanian technical delegation to agree on importing of Iraqi oil and on oil cooperation.

It was also learned that a ranking Iraqi official will arrive in Jordan soon to continue contacts with Jordan and to convey to the Jordanian Government the ideas of the Iraqi leadership.

Jordan will propose to the Iraqi envoy that the Jordanian Government should contact the Iraqi opposition to agree with it on representing the Iraqi leadership in the Amman conference within the framework of a political dialogue between the opposition and the Iraqi Government and as a step to build a free democracy in Iraq.

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Radio Reports Birri, al-Hariri Damascus Visit

NC2912064795 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister al-Hariri continue their visit to Damascus. Last night they met Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz joined the meeting.

Reports from Damascus indicate that the discussion focused on the latest regional developments, particularly with regard to the Syrian-Israeli talks and their atmosphere, and the results of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers' meetings. The meetings, which ended yesterday, voiced support and backing for Syria and Lebanon in the negotiations to regain the Golan and south Lebanon.

Hizballah's Qasim Comments on Washington Talks

NC2812194995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon's Hizballah today reiterated its opposition to the process of bargaining in the Middle East which aims to impart a legal character to the Israeli occupation.

Commenting on the negotiations in Washington between Syria and the Zionist entity, Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim declared that just negotiations must involve the return of usurped territories to their owners. He emphasized: We will strongly oppose any talks or solutions that will fragment the occupied territories.

Shaykh Qasim said that the jihad against the Zionists will continue until the occupiers are expelled from south Lebanon. He added that resistance will continue as long as one inch of territory remains under Zionist occupation.

Hizballah Aide on Syria, Internal Issues

MM2812171495 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Dec 95 p 5

[Interview with Shaykh Na'im Qasim, deputy secretary general of the Hizballah party, by Tariq Tarshishi in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Tarshishi] There is a great deal of talk these days about the shrinking of the role of the resistance against Israel in Southern Lebanon in the light of the reported progress or the chances of progress on the Syrian-Israeli negotiations track.... Where does the resistance stand in respect of all this?

[Qasim] The last visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was aimed basically at the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria. We have not heard from anyone and nobody has contacted us in regard to the question of resistance. Thus all the predictions that are being made about the link between the resumption of negotiations and the happening of any particular matter pertaining to the resistance are completely false. We consider our resistance to be against the occupier of our land and consequently nothing will affect the resistance as long as our land continues to be occupied, and we have a duty to liberate it and there is no room for any talk of reassuring Israel or saving it from our operations.

[Tarshishi] What will the fate of the resistance be should progress be made on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Qasim] We are a resistance directed against the invaders and not a party to the negotiating process. The resistance does not constitute a card in the negotiations. It is a an act of struggle for the liberation of the land. Whether progress is made or not in the negotiations, it is a matter isolated and separate from the natural resistance operations aimed at the liberation of the land.

[Tarshishi] In your view, why is there this insistence by many people on linking the resistance with the negotiations?

[Qasim] The linkage that is constantly made between the negotiations, irrespective of whether they succeed or fail, and the resistance is false and not a realistic one. It stems usually from political or media analyses. But the fact is that the resistance carries out its duty and operations irrespective of any progress or failure of negotiations.

What is happening is that we are faced with one of two probabilities in the matter of resistance as well as in the matter of negotiations: Either there will be major or small operations and either there should be dialogue and discussion or suspension, freezing, and stumbling. So it is logical to link, under any particular circumstances, one of the two probabilities in the matter of negotiations and one of the two probabilities in the matter of the resistance.

Warren Christopher might visit the region and by coincidence no major operations happen to take place at the time, so they say that the reason for this calm situation was due to the fact that Christopher was in the region. It might also happen that during the next round of talks a qualitative operation takes place, so they say that the escalation of the resistance operations was intended to up the ante in the negotiations while the fact of the matter is that there is no connection between

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the two issues. We affirm that there is no link between the two questions and that our resistance will continue, as is evident from what is taking place in the field.

[Tarshishi] It is stated that the resistance and Hizballah are governed by the rhythm of Syrian-Iranian relations and that their conditions are connected with the fate of these relations. What do you say to that?

[Qasim] Our relations with Syria are good, particularly as the issues for which we operate and those for which Syria operates have a great deal in common. We support the prevalence of national peace in Lebanon and we are against Israel. We support people's freedom of expression and many other such issues, and Syria supports many of the issues in this sphere. It is only natural, then, for such a relationship to exist between us and the Syrians.

As for Iran, it is concerned about the rights of the Lebanese people and the rights of the Palestinian people and holds the view that Lebanon should be independent from American and Israeli influence and that Lebanon should decide matters for itself. These matters fall also within the scope of the Syrian vision and the Syrian position.

When a link is made between the Syrian and Iranian positions and the Syrian and Hizballah party's positions it is because of the intertwining of their positions and convictions. I would not call it instructions and I reject this logic, because we in Lebanon have our own political. ideological, and struggle concepts and we act as persons who exist in Lebanon in the full meaning of the term. We do not accept being considered a card or a pawn manipulated by others either from afar or from near at hand. I believe that experience has proved this fact by virtue of our presence in the Lebanese arena with all that this entails.

The existence of relations between Syria and Iran brings joy to our hearts and makes us feel comfortable in view of the importance of these two states at the regional, international, and local levels. We are happy to have strong relations with them, and this is only natural, for every party or group in Lebanon needs to build relations that support its demands and convictions, let alone if the matter is so great as that of the occupation of the land, a matter which requires the help of friends for the liberation of that land.

[Tarshishi] It is reported that Syria will one day find itself forced to curb the role of Hizballah in Lebanon on the pretext that it is an extremist party that poses a threat to the peace process. What do you say to that?

[Qasim] It is not on the cards for Syria to curb or expand the role of Hizballah. This is because Syria has gotten us used to acting realistically in the Lebanese political arena and appreciate the efforts, struggle, and work of the domestic sides for building this country.

But as for the possibility that developments might take place in the future leading to a change or rearrangement of the conditions prevalent in Lebanon and the region and consequently necessitating the revision of many questions, this is a matter that is not confined to what Syria does but also extends to all internal, regional, and international developments. We would then have to study these matters and decide on the way to deal with them in a manner fully compatible with our convictions and with our continued confrontation of the Israeli occupier and with any developments that take place on the arena. We are not in the position of having some other people decide how to deal with us and what our role should be. This is because our role stems from our struggle, our arena, our supporters, and our internal position. Syria fully appreciates our position and we have an understanding with the Syrians and can find numerous ways and methods for better cooperation between us now and in the future. Nobody should try to play the game of disseminating feuds or planting the seeds of division or the possibility of future conflict of interests because the relationship between us and Syria is so advanced that I would not believe that matters would reach the stage of constraints or curbs. Indeed, there is constant cooperation between us which will take into consideration the way of facing up to the dangers that threaten Lebanon, Syria, and the region.

[Tarshishi] Hizballah's position against the settlement in the region is well-known. What will the attitude toward the settlement process be if it succeeds? Will the party go along with the state of affairs that will reign in the wake of a settlement?

[Qasim] I believe that the achievement and progress of a settlement is as likely as it stumbling in the future — that is, the settlement will not be 100 percent complete, just as we cannot also categorically affirm that it will not be 100 percent complete. Both likelihoods are there. So what we are working for is to oppose a settlement that is founded on the usurpation of the land. At least 80 percent of Palestinian territory has been usurped in favor of Israel under the settlement.

As to what developments will ensue, we will announce our detailed measures toward them when they occur. But this will be on the basic ground that we will not approve of or agree to occupation even if the regimes were to sign a settlement in which we do not believe. We will not be among those who agree or sign such a settlement. For in our view, the occupier is an occupier and the resistance is resistance. Any development toward a

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settlement that might take place will not satisfy us because it will not be compatible with our conviction that the land must be liberated.

[Tarshishi] It has been noted that you have recently shown some openness toward the present regime, which you oppose. Have you decided to join the regime?

[Qasim] We differentiate between opposition and boycott. Opposition does not mean that there should be boycott between us and the political authority. Indeed, there must be contacts and meetings for the sake of the interests of the people, desired issues, and many other matters. If we contact some members of the government, this should not mean that our position, which is opposed to the government's general policy in whole and part, has changed.

The 13 September massacre — the opening of fire on Hizballah demonstrators who were protesting against the Oslo accord — has been the cause of our refusal to contact the prime minister and the president of the republic, because we held them and others responsible for the massacre that took place. When the government expressed, through the Higher Relief Agency, its disapproval of what happened and offered some sort of apology, and so did the president of the republic, our boycott ended. But our opposition has not ended. This does not mean a change in our outlook. Likewise, our presence in the national assembly from the very beginning does not mean that we have become part of the regime, for it is only part of popular representation, which is a natural right. Likewise also, our presence in the administrations does not mean support or allegiance to the regime.

As to joining any government in the future, it is a matter that will be left until it arises, because matters are dependent on the government's policy and the person of its chairman and the program it will implement. It is not on the cards for us to join the government or support it.

[Tarshishi] Has the plan for the development of the southwestern suburb of Beirut — the "Al-Yasar" project — satisfied all or part of your remarks on the government's performance?

[Qasim] Our approval of the "Al-Yasar" project was the result of a hard political battle which we had waged against the government and alongside of the people for rejecting the estate company for the Awza'i area [of southern Beirut]. The "Al-Yasar" project provided a solution for the crisis in the area as an alternative to the government's project. We made certain remarks and held lengthy meetings with the engineers concerned with the project and proposed to them certain amendments which have been implemented. Thus we accept the project in principle and we are following it at present. Thus our agreement concerns a project which we believe will serve the interests of the people. Our agreement to does not mean that we agree on everything nor does it represent our views on the government's economic and political plans.

[Tarshishi] Your recent position vis-a-vis the "recent call" issued by the "Synods for Lebanon" looked like a call for dialogue. What do you say to that?

[Qasim] With regard to the "Synods" call, we differentiate between internal religious matters and the political matters that were raised. It is their right to meet and decide how to deal with their congregations in religious matters, for this is a matter that concerns them and we appreciate and respect it. We do not deal with it because it is a matter of religious details that pertains to the Catholics alone. But as for political matters, we have the right to support or oppose any position raised, ours being part of the views that are raised in the Lebanese arena and not something exceptional.

What we have noted is that there were numerous political ideas that were not sound from our point of view. So we criticized them and considered them to be contrary to any line they want to set for national harmony. An example of this is the talk about a democracy of harmony which would mean the paralyzing of any movement in the country, and nobody in the world would accept this new idea that has been devised. At best, people usually talk about majority. But the right of veto in the harmony theory will not be confined to the 18 recognized communities in Lebanon. For in the end we might find in Lebanon about one hundred sides opposing the appointment of an official, for example.

We believe that this proposal is not compatible with the age or the developments that have taken place in Lebanon and the region.

Our second remark concerned the talk about the Syrian forces in Lebanon and the need for their withdrawal as though they were occupation forces, while in fact Syria has played a major role in the establishment of national peace in Lebanon and the restoration of the role of the institutions and the checking of the Israeli current, in addition to many other things that happened solely because of the presence of the Syrian forces, without whom we would have been in a state of military altercation until now. Would this be the reward accorded to the Syrian armed forces' presence by comparing it, in an implicit manner, [to an occupation force] by asking for its withdrawal?

When we were asked why do not we join the Synods, I said that that was a Catholic affair and not a public matter that concerns all people. Thus it is not right for

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us to become part of a private entity. We discovered later that this insistence [on joining the Synods], which some have fallen for, was intended as a cosmetic affair, no more no less, as is evident from the fact that those attending from the other sides made only a few interpolations. This call was not successful in its political form. As for its religious aspect, this is a matter that does not concern us.

Reportage on Clashes With 'Occupation Troops'

Citizen Killed by Israelis

NC2912075895 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Zionist occupation troops have stepped up their aggression. Defenseless people were massacred this morning by Zionist shelling of the free villages in the south. The village of Qabrikha came under intensive Zionist bombardment involving all types of weapons at 0645 this morning. A malicious nail bomb hit a house, killing citizen 'Ali Ibrahim Mansur, 20. His father, Ibrahim Mansur, was seriously wounded when he was hit in the head by nails and Hasan Ibrahim Mansur and Usamah Fahs were also wounded. They were taken to Tibnin Hospital and from there to hospitals in Sidon and Tyre.

The Zionist artillery also shelled Wadi al-Saluqi and the outskirts of Qabrikha. Soon after 0700, the outskirts of Majdal Zun, Buyut al-Sayyid, and al-Mansuri came under concentrated fire of various calibers from the opposite sides. [passage omitted]

The Martyr Husayn Mansur Group of the Islamic Resistance at 0715 this morning attacked the al-Hardun position in the Western sector with rockets and machine guns, destroying its bunkers and fortifications and inflicting several casualties among its personnel. [passage omitted]

The fire support unit of the Islamic Resistance, the Martyr Asadallah al-Zayn Group, at 0805 this morning attacked the al-Qantarah position with the appropriate weapons, scoring direct hits.

IDF Sees Hizballah in Control

TA2912100695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Dec 95 p A4

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources in the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] Northern Command told HA'ARETZ yesterday that there has been a significant rise in activity in southern Lebanon in recent days. Intelligence sources in the command said the Syrians are turning a blind eye on Amal and Hizballah operations against the IDF and the SLA [South Lebanese Army], which take place despite the fact that Israel and Syria have resumed talks in Washington. [passage omitted]

In recent days, Hizballah men have videotaped five incidents in which they attacked IDF and SLA posts in south Lebanon. In one incident, the tape clearly shows an attack on an IDF post, in which a Sagger missile was fired at a tank with soldiers on it. The tank was lightly damaged, but the solders were not harmed. The Hizballah fighters watch the tapes and draw operational conclusions.

The sources claim that, in fact, Hizballah has seized full military and political control over most south Lebanon villages, and that the local inhabitants assist it mainly in gathering intelligence on IDF movements. [passage omitted]

Report Explains Islamic Group's Policies

NC2812144295 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Najwa Marun]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] When the Islamic Group entered the Chamber of Deputies in 1992, many voices condemned it. Some said the group was a terrorist movement, others stressed it identified with extremist Islamic fundamentalists. This image was consolidated when Deputy Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi was seen entering the first parliament session with a prayer mat under his arm.

But like the other forces on the Lebanese stage, the Islamic Group is preparing for the 1996 parliamentary elections. Has the group changed its positions four years after Deputies Fathi Yakan, As'ad Harmush, and Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi entered parliament? How is the group preparing for the elections in Beirut and the north? Who will it ally itself with, and on what basis? Does it believe that the elections will inevitably take place, or that the term of the Chamber of Deputies will be extended, as is being leaked?

Before we enter into the labyrinths of elections, we must pause to discuss the group's launch, ideology, political line, and reaction to accusations that it is a terrorist organization and that it belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Sources at the group have categorically denied accusations that it has ever been "a terrorist movement; its bright history, known to people near and far, refutes all tendentious allegations and claims." The sources add: "Not only does the group deny this accusation, but it is also working to combat terrorism. It believes that the Islamic movements that were dubbed as terrorist are

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either ignorant of true Islam, have been infiltrated by the enemies of Islam, or are out to defend themselves against the injustice and oppression imposed on them."

On rumors that the group is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the sources explain that "the Islamic Group in Lebanon is not a branch of any movement, although it cooperates and coordinates with all Islamic forces, trends, and organizations worldwide, as well as with non-Islamic forces and trends, in everything that serves its Islamic project in Lebanon, considering Lebanon's special character." They stress that "the Islamic Group backs the establishment of a universal Islamic authority to steer Islamic political and preaching activity, guide Islamic awakening, and offer to the world a civilized Islamic project that helps solve the problems humanity is facing in every sphere." [passage omitted]

The group believes, according to the sources, "that the establishment of an Islamic government needs an environment with particular characteristics that are not available in multicultural, multisect, and multiparty Lebanon; the Lebanese entity is not fit for any form of unilateral ideological rule."

The sources point out that "the group views the Palestinian cause as Islam's primary political issue in this age. It considers all Palestinian territory, both the part occupied in 1948 and the part occupied in 1967, as an integral part of Muslim land, and the Islamic nation must not relinquish any inch of it. The group believes that holy jihad is the only way to liberate the land and ensure the people's right to a free, dignified life." [passage omitted]

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Foreign Minister al-Shar' 'Optimistic' on Wye Talks

JN2712204495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' made a statement to reporters at the Sheraton Hotel a short while before the Damascus Declaration meeting began. He said:

We will discuss many issues, most prominent among these is the peace process and a document that constitutes a framework for joint Arab Action which will be endorsed during this meeting.

We will also discuss general regional developments. Every minister, he added, will present his point of view regarding these developments. We hope that we will come out of this meeting with a unified stand and clear solidarity with regard to all Arab affairs.

In reply to a question on how optimistic he is on the negotiations currently underway in Washington, he said: We are optimistic.

Press on Talks, Says Optimism 'Not Enough'

JN2912072895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 29 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its commentaries today, AL-THAWRAH speaks about the peace talks on the Syrian track. The talks got under way in Maryland near Washington the day before yesterday.

AL-THAWRAH says: Syrian-Israeli talks have received special attention. The world hopes that the talks will mark a turning point in the political process on the Syrian track, and consequently the Lebanese track, after a six-month hiatus. The peace talks stumbled as a result of Israel's stubborn and intransigent policy, which adhered to the familiar no's. Israel rejected the principle of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and return to the 4 June 1967 lines.

The newspaper adds: Although the current talks are exploratory and confined to procedural matters and to an agreement on subjects of discussion, they must reflect Israeli openness and desire to advance the peace process. The talks must provide evidence that matters are proceedings in the right direction and that the peace train has returned to the right track to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. This peace must be based on international resolutions and must guarantee full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH says the talks must have clear steps and objectives and must rest on the Madrid framework and the UN and Security Council resolutions. The talks must also engage in the substance and basics of a solution and find a mechanism for implementation that would translate good intentions and honest plans for peace into actions.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: From the very beginning, Syria has emphasized the need to advance the peace process and the importance of the U.S. role and the need to activate it. This is what Washington is currently emphasizing, in order to build peace on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

The newspaper asserts that the essence of peace is territory and that without the return of the territory in full, there will be no peace. Therefore, the one who refuses to withdraw from territory does not want peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds that Syria embraced peace on the basis of the implementation of these resolutions and the U.S. initiative, in whose light the Madrid conference was held. Syria will not abandon these principles and will support any effort to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. This peace must include equitable [mutakafi'ah] and balanced [mutawazinah] security arrangements on both sides of these lines.

The newspaper notes that the recent statements that came out of Israel were characterized by a positive change in tone unfamiliar to the one we were used to hearing from Israel. However, these statements remain mere words until they become concrete reality through a frank Israeli declaration about commitment to the principles of peace and implementing these principles. Therefore, progress in the peace process depends on a new, practical Israeli response to the requirements of peace.

AL-THAWRAH says the resumption of talks is indeed a new opportunity to discuss progress in the peace process. At any rate, commitment to the principles and foundations of peace remains the true yardstick of Israel's position. It is hoped that the Maryland talks will come up with a good formula in this respect.

AL-BA'TH comments on the same issue. Writing under the headline "Optimism Alone is Not Enough," the paper says: Hope alone is not enough. The atmosphere of optimism in the Maryland talks will continue to prevail unless surprises happen. This basically depends on clarity and not resorting to a cycle of ambiguity by the other side.

AL-BA'TH points out that the Syrian delegation to the talks, as usual, was clear and frank about the mission it is going to perform and the requirements it is facing — the requirements for a just and comprehensive peace

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that is based on international legitimacy and the UN resolutions and the principles of the U.S. initiative. Our delegation was also clear in its response to the announcement on the resumption of the talks. Thus, it made it public that it is open and flexible in line with the foundations and principles of the peace process, without any alternation or change in these principles by the other side. Therefore, the Syrian delegation supported the new opportunity for peace efforts and reiterated Syria's commitment to its strategic peace option since the Madrid conference.

The newspaper concludes: The Israeli delegation is required to translate Peres' words into deeds. Practical steps are needed to pave the way for a just, comprehensive, and viable peace.

Commentary Says Country's Intentions Need No Test

JN2812160395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: A new round of talks on the Syrian-Israeli track began near the U.S. capital yesterday with the participation of the United States which acted actively and effectively in the past weeks with the aim of ending the stalemate in the four-year old peace process. These years have been wasted by previous Israeli intransigence.

It is premature for expectations and assumptions on the results of a round that began last night, especially since this round is described as one that aims at exploring or testing the intentions and positions. While taking these ideas into consideration, it can be said that this round is held in an atmosphere that is not tense, which is something that relieved the observers of the peace process and was a result of the change in recent statements by Israeli officials on the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process.

These Israeli officials, in their statements, agree that peace with Syria guarantees security more than keeping land, that comprehensive peace cannot be realized without Syria, that Syria will not accept any peace that does not return the whole of the occupied Golan, and that peace with Syria means peace with the Arabs.

The meeting of the Damascus Declaration ministers at the same time peace talks are resuming is evidence of Damascus' role and its Arab position. The Damascus Declaration ministers began a round of talks in Damascus yesterday at the same time the current round of peace talks were beginning near the U.S. capital. It is also known that the Damascus Declaration states support the Syrian position on the peace process and attach any progress in the peace process in the future to the realization of peace on the Syrian track in accordance with the Syrian position that is in line with UN resolutions. This Arab support of the Syrian position is an expression of Arab solidarity with Arab Syria, which supported and continues to sincerely support any Arab cause. This solidarity was also expressed by the Arab League yesterday.

Although political and media circles noted the flexible change in statements by Israeli officials, they note at the same time that some Israeli officials, regardless of the extent of their responsibilities, continue to speak with the same previous intransigence that caused the stalemate in the peace process. Therefore, the relief and optimistic expectations caused by the flexible Israeli statements will continue to be a cautious relief especially since the Israeli authorities have not yet stated clearly and in specific words that they intend to withdraw fully from the occupied Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders without leaving behind any traces of the occupation, including settlements or a monitoring posts.

The intentions of the talks near the U.S. capital are going to be explored since these talks were described as exploratory. In fact, the intentions and the ideas that are supposed to be explored in these talks are Israeli intentions and ideas so that it will become clear for all whether the new flexibility in the statements of Israeli officials have resulted in a positive development in the Israeli position. In other words, will the flexible Israeli statements change into positive positions? And will these positive positions—if Israel adopts them—change into actions, that is full withdrawal from the occupied Golan and southern lebanon? As for Syrian intentions, they do not need any touchstones or exploration for a very a simple reason, which is that Syrian intentions are not hidden ones; they are well-known positions and not only statements. These positions are accurate and specific and not just clear. The Syrian position is summed up in the call for peace that gives rights to those who are entitled to them without encroachment or boasting. It is peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy which call for the Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and elimination of any form of the Israeli presence in the Golan and southern Lebanon after the withdrawal.

Syria's intentions and positions are summed up in what President Hafiz al-Asad said: Full peace in return for full withdrawal. This establishes a just peace which secures the rights and dignity of all.

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Talas on Israeli Stand, Saddam, Arab Affairs

NC2812154695 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 25 Dec 95 pp 8-12

[Report on interview with Defense Minister Mustafa Talas by 'Adil Hammudah in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] During the period of unity [between Egypt and Syria under the United Arab Republic], Talas served in Egypt, or in the southern province, as it was called then. He served in Fayid, Sinai, and at the Huckstep. He experienced Egypt close up and realized its magnitude and influence. Thus, what disturbs him most now are the desperate attempts in the Arab world to marginalize Egypt's role. In his view, it is a serious issue that will benefit nobody but Israel. In its current negotiations with Syria Israel is playing games and maneuvering, the latest such games being the proposal to place early warning stations on the Golan. This comes at a time when there is no need for such stations, for satellites are roaming the region and spying day and night. Talas said:

Actually it was Yitzhaq Rabin who raised this issue with a view to obstructing the negotiations. Rabin was not sincere in his talk of peace. He spoke about one thing and meant another. Had he wanted peace, the four years that have passed since the Madrid conference would have been enough for peace to prevail in all the region. Rabin's proposal on the warning stations showed he wanted to keep a symbol of Israel's occupation of Syrian territory, which proves to us that his intention was malign.

I asked him: Was it that evil intention that killed Rabin? I mean, did Rabin have to get killed for the peace process to start moving on the Syrian track, as we feel it doing now? To this, Talas answered: Rabin's assassination has cleansed the stigma of terrorism from the Arabs and Muslims. His assassination at the hands of a Jewish fanatic showed the whole world that there are snakes in Israel, which they breed in their pits and dens. How could a citizen get close enough to shoot a prime minister after passing through several security barriers? The rancor they feel toward each other is vicious, let alone what they feel toward others, which must be tremendous. The fanaticism they have bred backfired on them!

I commented: The State of Israel was originally set up on a religious basis. In such a country, the more fanatical ones win.

Talas said: To them, God is a God of war. They have killed, burned, and expelled the Arabs on the basis of commandments and orders written in their holy books. They believe that God created only Jews. As for the rest of mankind, they are animals.

I asked: In an age when the Soviet Union has collapsed and the Arabs have been forced to negotiate, what elements of strength in Syria's negotiating stand with Israel?

To this, Talas replied: Our stand has firm grounds, such as the Security Council resolutions on the inadmissibility of seizing others' territory by force. When President al-Asad exchanged messages with George Bush and Bill Clinton, we found that the U.S. Administration agreed with President al-Asad's line of reasoning and that there could be no solution except under the aegis of international legitimacy—a comprehensive withdrawal in return for a comprehensive peace, as was the case between China and the Soviet Union [not further explained]. When we stick to our rights during negotiations we look to the domestic front too. Our national front is cohesive. This even applies to oppositionists. For instance, Jamal al-Atasi was at a conference in Qatar a few months ago. After telling the conferees that he represented the opposition in Syria, he said: "I ask you in the name of pan-Arab honor to back Hafiz al-Asad, because he acts along pan-Arab lines." Israel wants hegemony over the region so it will be the only power, and this is what we reject; so does the Arab man-on-the-street.

I asked: Is the time element among Syria's bargaining chips at the negotiations?

Talas said: Both time and the right.

I asked: How is that?

He said: History is not over. By thinking that it can dominate the region, Israel is forgetting that there are more engineers in the Arab nation, for instance, than the whole Jewish population of Israel. There are at least five million engineers. Accordingly, it is impossible for Israel to dominate this nation. It is also impossible for this nation to accept what some Arab governments are doing by rushing to Israel and dealing with it in humiliating ways, including some governments that are geographically and militarily distant from the conflict. The Jews feel that they are a superior people, but I do not see where this superiority lies? In trade? We in Syria do not feel any impact from an Israeli superiority in trade, for it is hard for an Egyptian to pass by Syrian products and buy Jewish products. I imagine that in the future the United States itself, which pampered the Hebrew state, will scream about it and there will be opposition to it similar to the million-man march. During that march, a black Christian attacked Jewish ethics and accused them of sucking peoples' blood. U.S. statistics show that there are 3 million homeless

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people who live in parks and streets. This is what made them [not further specified] wonder about the $10 billion that the United States pays to Israel. How could these billions be paid to Israel when it does not want peace? The U.S. conscience and sense of awareness must be awakened. When this happens, the Americans will discover that Israel is a burden for them and the world and that it is an instrument of sabotage, not prosperity.

I said to the Syrian defense minister: But on the Arab side, some people are rushing [toward detente with Israel].

He commented: Yes, and I do not know a single excuse for those who are doing that in the [Arab] east or west.

I asked him: Is Arab thinking now in crisis?

Yes, he said.

Why, I asked.

He answered: Because the forces that attacked it were fiercer than its defense. The United States sought to fragment the Arab nation and is now seeking to curb Egypt's role. Of course, this affects everybody from east to west. The United States is also trying to play all its trump cards to make every Arab country fear the others. It was the United States that pushed Iraq into war with Iran. When Iraq became strong, the United States exaggerated about Iraq's power, thus laying the groundwork to destroy it. It drafted a policy for Saddam Husayn to pursue, and he rushed to occupy Kuwait. The first person to discover the truth about Saddam Husayn was President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. I was in his house offering condolences on the martyrdom of Lieutenant General 'Abd-al-Mun'im Riyad. Saddam Husayn asked to meet President 'Abd-al-Nasir at his home. That was in 1969. 'Abd-al-Nasir asked me — and Dr. Sami al-Durubi was with me — to wait for him. After he came back from his meeting with Saddam, we had lunch with him and he told us: Saddam Husayn is America's man in the region. He said Egyptian intelligence had taken pictures of him at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo when he was studying and living in Egypt. He said Saddam received money from the Faculty of Law at Cairo University, from Egyptian intelligence, and from the Americans. He was always greedy for money.

Talas added: America rewarded Saddam in the Gulf War. General Schwarzkopf could easily have reached Baghdad to eliminate the Iraqi regime, but America wanted to kill two birds with one stone: First, to reward an agent who had spent all those years serving its policies and interests; second, to turn him into a bogey man in the region. Naturally, we are pained at what is happening in Iraq. But I cannot forgive Saddam Husayn for killing everyone who had warmly shaken hands with Hafiz al-Asad, such as the director of his own office, who worked with him for 10 years. He also killed 10 ministers after fabricating a false conspiracy by them; he accused them of receiving 300 dinars from Syria. Is this logical? Saddam Husayn also turned against [his predecessor] Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, seized power, and took up the American line. For the record, al-Bakr used to cry when he talked about Arab nationalism. But he died from sorrow and anguish at what happened to his son. Saddam told him: Your son is cooperating with Syria. The son died of torture, and the father died of grief. For the sake of history and the truth, I state that no one from the al-Bakr family cooperated with us.

Talas added: Saddam Husayn slaughtered Arab thought. He poisoned [former Algerian] President Boumedienne after the latter threatened to disclose the secrets of the Algiers agreement [between Iraq and Iran]. He chose a kind of poison difficult for the body to reject, as he always unhesitatingly did to his adversaries. He shouted slogans about fighting Israel but he fought Iran and occupied Kuwait instead. If he had really wanted to fight Israel, he would have talked with Syria, which has a border with Israel, and he would have talked with Egypt. He wanted to fight Israel without saying hello to Syria, Egypt, or any other Arab country. He was dominated by conceit and megalomania. The Americans took advantage of this, built him up him, and sent to him the engineer who made him the super gun, while Italy and Turkey sent him the pipes. They turned him loose to frighten the Gulf states. He insisted on terrorizing the Gulf states, and they paid him at least $35 billion. Now that we are speaking about Iraq, I will say that we in Syria support Iraq's unity and oppose its partition. Iraq must stand united and strong. Dividing Iraq into north, south, and center paves the way for dividing Syria as well, and perhaps Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Arab world. In this way, Israel would remain the regional empire.

I asked: Could we say that the Gulf war has led to the collapse of the old Arab order?

Talas said: The fact is that the United States conducted the Gulf war in a way that placed the region under its direct protection so it gained everything from it. Thus, the Arabs must realize that others are working for their own interests, so why can we not work for our own interests and keep Arab wealth for the Arabs? I said that were it not for Syria and for the military expense of confronting Israel, Syria would be richer than Switzerland. But we decided to confront the Zionist entity planted by colonialism in the heart of the Arab world to keep Asian Arabs far from African Arabs and to be a barrier to Arab unity. Attempts

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are now being made inside and outside the region to marginalize Egypt's role, which is unnatural for Egypt has a historical role and carries great weight culturally and in human terms. It is located in the heart of the region and touches the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, the two major seas of the Arabs. We must be aware of this scheme. We tell the United States: You are friends and welcome. But we also must tell them that it is in our interest as Arabs to be one nation. I personally feel much bothered by the media's talk of Middle Easternism and strongly resent it. If you really want a true Middle East, you must let Turkey and Iran join with us. We must wake up to what is happening. I am optimistic about unity between Egypt and Syria. When they get closer they form a strong base. There are attempts to contain Saudi Arabia; and Egypt and Syria must break this encirclement of it. [passage omitted]

I asked him: We have noticed that economic openness is advancing simultaneously with the peace negotiations!

He answered: To tell the truth, there is no relationship between the two. We opened the door for the peace process in 1974. As for the open-door policy, we do not mind people getting rich, provided that the state gets its share. At the same time, we do not accept the intervention of the World Bank or the IMF in our economy.

What about personal freedom in Syria, I asked?

Talas said: It is increasing. There is no objection to the exercise of political freedoms, provided it is not in the service of the enemy. Do not forget that the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of everything and engaged in violence in a way that forced us to use counterviolence against them. Freedom is available. [Syrian comedian] Durayd Lahham, like [Egyptian comedian] 'Adil Imam, is making people laugh in our theaters and is criticizing us, and we are happy.

I told him: We are also happy to have had this dialogue.

Al-Asad Receives Damascus Declaration Ministers

JN2812181795 Damascus SANA in Arabic
1720 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 28 Dec (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states at the People's Palace at 1500 today. They are Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister; 'Amr Musa, foreign minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt; His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister of Saudi Arabia; Rashid 'Abdallah al-Nu'aymi, foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates; Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs in the Sultanate of Oman; Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah, foreign minister of the State of Bahrain; Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, Qatari foreign minister; Faruq al-Shar', Syrian foreign minister; and Shaykh Fahim al-Qasimi, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The ministers briefed the president on the subjects discussed during their meeting in Damascus and what they agreed on to bolster cooperation among the Damascus Declaration states and to achieve the objectives of the Declaration.

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Afghanistan

Government Ready To Seek Peace With 'All' Factions

BK2812131995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1228 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Marc Lavine]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec 28 (AFP) — The Afghan government is ready to send top officials around the country to broker a peace with all the warring factions including the Taleban militia, government sources said Thursday.

The offer shows an unprecedented sign of flexibility on the part of the beleaguered Kabul administration in its attitude towards other factions, defence ministry sources and foreign observers here said.

The three-year-old government of President Borhanoddin Rabbani has never before offered to travel to the provincial strongholds of its political and military enemies for talks.

"We are offering a fresh opportunity for dialogue and talks with the opposition," the defence source told AFP.

"If the other parties are not ready to hold talks with us in Kabul, we will be more than pleased to go anywhere for negotiations, including the main Taleban stronghold of Kandahar," he added.

The Taleban took the southern city last year at the start of its surprise campaign to establish an Islamic state and disarm the traditional mojahedin groups who have been fighting for control amongst themselves.

"There is no doubt about the reconciliation and dialogue offer. We sincerely want to talk to the Taleban, Uzbek leader General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, former acting president Sebghatollah Mujadedi and all other opposing factions," he added.

The source said any negotiations would centre on how to form a broad-based government for [words indistinct] Afghanistan that would include "all elements of Afghan society."

"No warring faction has the capacity to crush the entire opposition militarily or by force, which brings us to the point when we should all sit down around a table and discuss this peacefully," he said.

The offer came during a meeting of Afghanistan's cabinet status High State Council late Wednesday. Afterwards, members expressed the government's desire to solve the conflict peacefully.

"The Islamic state (of Afghanistan) has shown on several occasions its readiness for holding talks between the warring factions in a bid to tackle the Afghan issue peacefully," a council statement published Thursday said.

"All Afghans have the right to live here free and play their part in the reconstruction of this country," the council said.

"The Islamic state is ready to send high-ranking delegations to other forces and groups for negotiations aimed at the immediate solution of problems existing between the warring sides," it added.

The statement, published by the state-controlled Bakhtar news agency, did not specify by name which factions the government was seeking to negotiate with.

The Kabul government has in the past offered to talk to the Taleban militia — which is laying siege to Kabul — and other factions about a power-sharing deal, but the warring groups rejected the offers, the government said.

But the government said it has been conducting lower-level talks with Dostam's Jumbish-e Milli — which controls part of northern Afghanistan — and the Hezb-e Wahdat which the government is battling in the centre of the country.

In addition, foreign analysts here say Rabbani has agreed to personally travel to northern Mazar-e Sharif to meet Dostam, who split from the government in 1993 and joined with former premier Golboddin Hekmayar in a bid to topple the Rabbani. [sentence as received]

The administration is coming under increasing pressure from the Taleban — encamped on three fronts around Kabul — as well as from Dostam who is facing off the government north of here.

The country has been wracked by more than three years of bloody civil war which broke out after the Mojahedin leaders failed to agree on how to share power after the Soviet army ended its 10-year-occupation.

Taleban Spokesman Explains Rejection of Peace Talks

BK2912084095 Hong Kong AFP in English 0828 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Dec 29 (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban Islamic militia Friday rejected Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani's offer of talks to resolve the three-year old civil war in the country.

Commenting on the offer announced by Rabbani's spokesman in Kabul Thursday, a Pakistan-based Taleban spokesman, Mufti Mohammad Mas'um Afghani, termed it a "ruse."

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"We know by experience that similar moves by Rabbani in the past have turned out to be a smokescreen for military preparations against Taleban," the Taleban spokesman told AFP.

"The latest offer falls in the same category," he said, adding that if Rabbani was sincere he should quit the office he has been "illegally" occupying.

Meanwhile, a leader in a multi-party Afghan coalition opposed to Rabbani here said it would decide whether to accept or reject the offer in the coming days.

"A meeting of the Supreme Coordination Council of the Revolution of Afghanistan (SCCRA) is expected in three days," general Painda Mohammad said.

Painda belongs to the National Islamic Movement of Afghan Uzbek chief General Abdol Rashid Dostam, which is one of the main components of SCCRA along with former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Eslami.

He said former Afghan president, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, whose faction, Jabhah Nijat-e-Milli, is also part of SCCRA is due in Pakistan from New York on Sunday.

Afghani said the Islamic movement would not fall into the "trap" which he said the Kabul authorities were trying to set up.

He recalled that early this year Rabbani's forces had "treacherously attacked" Taleban early this year around Kabul while Pakistani religious leader Maulana Fazalur Rehman was in the area to mediate between the two sides.

Afghani said the attack was launched as the Taleban fought against the Shia Hezb-e-Wahdat faction in Kabul's outskirts — during the movement's first abortive attempt to take over the Afghan capital.

Presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said in Kabul Thursday that Rabbani was ready to go to the strongholds of rival factions, including the Taleban, to broker an end to the conflict.

Obervers in Kabul noted that the offer showed an unprecedented degree of flexibility on the part of the beleaguered Kabul administration in its attitude towards other factions.

In the past, the president has never publicly offered to travel to the provincial strongholds of his political and military adversaries for talks.

Taleban, who emerged from Koranic schools in Pakistan and southern Afghanistan about a year ago, are currently besieging the Afghan capital. They have vowed to oust Rabbani and rule according to Islamic law.

Mas'ud on Talebanis: 'War Imposed' by Pakistan

BR2912113695 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 29 Dec 95 p 7

[Report on interview by Ettore Mo with Kabul City Commission Chairman Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in Jabul Saraj; date not given: "The Lion of Kabul's Den" — all place names as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kabul—[passage omitted] Kabul is now like Sarajevo — the best place to observe the beginning of the end of the world. And I think that there is no more anguished witness of this tragedy than Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, the extraordinary strategist of the "jihad," who has already earned a place in the history books and in legend as the "lion of Panshir." [passage omitted]

I went to visit him at Jabul Saraj, his headquarters in Parwan province, a couple of hours' drive from Kabul. The moment he saw me he recalled our meeting in the mountains [in 1984] after the seventh offensive and gave me a warm smile, though he so rarely smiles and always looks so sad. [passage omitted]

[Hezb-e Eslami leader Golboddin] Hekmatyar is finished. He is finished even for Pakistan, which would have liked to establish him in Kabul with absolute powers in order to manipulate him at its pleasure and to extend and consolidate its influence over the entire Islamic band of Central Asia. "Islamabad has always set its sights on him," Mas'ud said. "Hekmatyar was supposed to be the leader of the new Afghanistan liberated from the soviets. There could be no other choice for the generals of the ISI, Pakistan's military secret service. He was the favorite of the Ulema, of the right-wing extremists, and of the reactionary clergy. During the war the millions of U.S. dollars were directed to Hekmatyar, as were most of the resources, the weapons, and the Stingers. Only he, Washington strategists and politicians thought, could defeat the 'shuravi,' annihilate the Red Army. But Kabul was taken by us, who came down from the North, and not from the Southeast or the West, where Hezb-e Eslami was deployed. Hekmatyar was crushed and dazed in the corner of the ring, like a defeated boxer who has thrown in the towel; and so was Pakistan, which supported him in the contest, trusting in the effectiveness of his fists and muscles."

It was then that Pakistan, blamed for Hekmatyar's failure, produced the Talebanis card. [passage omitted]

"At first," Mas'ud said, "people were subjugated by their [the Talebanis] message, because they exercised exclusively spiritual power. They claimed that they wanted to purge the country of corrupt leaders who had become thieves, assassins, street bandits, and drug

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dealers. They intended to restore the shariah, the Islamic laws, as the Koran demands. Instead, they restored ancient barbarities such as the severing of hands and ears, they destroyed antennas and television sets, they closed down girls' schools because girls and women had to stay shut up in their kitchens or stables, and a ban was placed on any kind of entertainment. Thus, as every day they claimed new territorial gains, they lost the initial credibility that constituted their sole real strength."

In the first days of their purging campaign, when they fell on Kandahar and liberated it, then on Ghazni and Maidan Shah, the Talebanis swore that they would never fire a single shot at Kabul. But now they do so regularly, every day, and their missiles damaged the cupolas of Pul-e-Kheshti mosque and killed dozens of worshippers, knelt in prayer. They attack from Charasiab, where Hekmatyar was encamped before being overwhelmed a few months ago by student fighters who drove him ignominiously south, to the border with Pakistan, so that he would no longer cause any trouble.

The Talebanis are certainly endowed with heavenly enlightenment, but they are unable to sustain the burden of a military operation which, according to experts, could cost over $80 million a month and which requires 15,000 gallons of gasoline a day. "This is definitely a war imposed from abroad," Ahmad Shah Mas'ud said, "and when we say 'abroad,' we mean Pakistan... We are deeply disappointed with the policy that Benazir Bhutto has adopted with respect to Afghanistan. But Benazir's hands are tied; she is directly answerable to Islamabad's secret service, the ISI. The Pakistani generals have an idea of what the Afghan Government or the governments of the other countries of the region should be like; and to achieve their objective they manipulate the pawns available to them — yesterday Hekmatyar, now the Talebanis."

Like Napoleon, Mas'ud does not sleep much — a few hours a night. All kinds of people call at his den in Jabul Saraj, from dawn until dusk — officers, sergeants, corporals. They come from all fronts — north, south, east, west. Please advise us, boss. He marks the map in red: Strengthen here, he says; strengthen there. Then comes the hour of prayer, and off they all go to pray.

"Boss, how can I resist? There are too many of them..."

"Resist, resist. I have confidence in you..."

Off he goes, happy, his heart freed from all uncertainties.

"Commander, they say that the Talebanis, Hekmatyar, and Dostum are about to form an alliance and to attack Kabul jointly in February."

"I am aware of this plan, but no official agreement has yet been signed on a joint military operation. Pakistan has not yet devised a political platform acceptable to all three."

But what if that did happen? Dostum, who has 80,000 men, has already begun disruptive operations in the North, along the Salang pass. The Talebanis could win back Hekmatyar and attack Kabul from the Southeast and Southwest.

"So far we have succeeded in defending ourselves," Mas'ud said with a smile.

Hezb-e Eslami Statement Calls For End to Fighting

LD2912005995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] All must remember that no one can [?impose himself] on the Afghan nation by force.

This point was made by mojahed amir brother Hekmatyar at a glorious meeting which was held yesterday to denounce the 27 December event. This date marks the black day when the savage Russian forces invaded our beloved country.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent has reported from Sarobi, the headquarters of the military forces of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], that the meeting started at 0930 and ended at 1200. The meeting began after the recitation of a few verses from the holy Koran. A number of ulema and commanders then addressed the meeting and spoke in detail about our Muslim and mojahed nation's self-sacrifices. In condemning the Russians and the communist regime's cruelty, they emphasized the bravery and resistance of our Muslim and mojahed nation. [passage omitted]

At the end of the meeting the following resolution was issued:

This day, 27 December, is a day for remembering the bitter experience of the shameless and savage invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army. The savage Russian forces invaded our country. As a result of our Muslim and brave people's self-sacrifice and jihad, the Russian Army was defeated and the foundation of the Soviet Union was dismantled. However, the Russians and the other self-interested circles' intervention in our country did not end after the victory of our Muslim nation's armed jihad. Our nation would not stop their jihad and resistance before the end of these interventions and aggressions.

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In denouncing the Russian invasion of 27 December, we — the mojahedin and allies of the Hezb-e Eslami of Afghanistan — make the following announcement:

1. We ask for the immediate ending of foreign intervention and aggression against Afghanistan.

2. We ask for the ending of fighting and bloodshed in Afghanistan and we state that we do not regard the fighting as a means to resolve the present difficulties.

3. We support peace-seeking efforts in the country by anybody, and we will not spare any endeavor or self-sacrifice on this path.

4. We regard the implementation of the following points as a means to resolve the country's current problems:

A: A mechanism should be worked out which is acceptable to all relevant parties.

B: A transitional government should urgently be set up to which the government power can be transferred.

C: The capital, cities, and provinces should be controlled by a joint security force.

D: A competent commission should be set up to organize elections.

E: The election process should be completed and elections held during the term of the provisional government.

5: We want an independent, sovereign and a united Afghanistan.

6: Once again we announce the continuation of our sacred jihad until the formation of an Islamic system.

Kabul Protests Refugee Treatment in Pakistan

LD2812195195 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has handed a memorandum to the UNHCR office in Kabul concerning the harassment and mistreatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The memorandum says:

The international mass media and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's press have reported that, following the bomb explosion on 21 December, the Pakistani authorities have started to harass and mistreat Afghan refugees living in Pakistan; their houses have been searched [words indistinct], and (?a large number of refugees) have been imprisoned. [Passage indistinct] The mistreatment, imprisonment, and searching of the houses of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan are contrary to the 1951 Convention on Refugee Status and the 1967 supplementary protocol (?as well as the agreement signed) between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the UNHCR [words indistinct].

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks the UNHCR to establish contacts with the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to take steps concerning (?the treatment) and the release of Afghan refugees from prison.

Residential Areas of Kabul Under Rocket Attack

LD2812123595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Residential areas in the central and eastern parts of Afghanistan's capital were last night and this morning the targets of rocket and heavy weapon fire attacks.

According to the Central News Unit from Kabul, at least 13 houses have been damaged in these attacks, but no reports on potential casualties have yet been available.

Afghanistan's Defense Ministry sources state that the attacks came from Taleban positions in the south of Kabul.

According to this report, government and Taleban forces have been firing at each others' positions in the Rishkhor, Charasyab, and Kheyrabad since early last night.

Seven Reportedly Killed

LD2812165095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A report from Kabul says that the Afghan capital has been hit by 21 rockets since last night.

According to the Central News Unit, at least seven people were killed and 20 wounded as a result of the rocket attacks.

India

Rao Under 'Pressure' To Declare Nation Nuclear Power

BK2912050595 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 28 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by K.P. Nayar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pressure is mounting on the P.V. Narasimha Rao government to declare India a nuclear power, without going in for another test.

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Those in New Delhi who take crucial decisions on defence and security are unanimous that the country's two-decade-old nuclear policy has been made redundant following the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May this year.

At the same time, there is total agreement within the Government that India should not go in for its second nuclear test.

Influential members of the strategic community here believe that India should make its declaration in Geneva when the Conference on Disarmament (CD) re-convenes next month.

At meetings during the last few months involving the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the defence and nuclear establishments and the ministries of external affairs and defence there has been rising support for a 'middle line' in nuclear policy - of abjuring a test, yet claiming nuclear weapon status.

These meetings centred around scores of detailed policy papers and options, following the indefinite extension of the NPT, according to highly-placed sources in the Government.

Some of the key inputs, which went into the review of India's nuclear choices were:

— The policy of "keeping the nuclear option open" has become redundant unless this option can be turned into effective deterrence to protect India's interests in both diplomatic and military terms.

— The Brown Amendment was tantamount to legitimising Pakistan's nuclear programme. With the U.S. having condoned Israel's nuclear programme earlier, India's position, in terms of nonproliferation, as the only threshold nuclear weapon state has become more vulnerable than ever.

— The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) have both been made untenable following the indefinite extension of the NPT, which made it necessary to review India's nuclear policy.

— Although India is not a party to the NPT, Article III of the Treaty - which calls for international inspection of the nuclear facilities of non-weapon states is in practice becoming customary law. India may not be able to avoid inspection in the long run unless it is acknowledged as a nuclear power.

— The prohibitions on peaceful nuclear cooperation with developing countries imposed by the London Club - the industrialised nations with access to nuclear technology - had added to the deep resentment among non-aligned countries over the violation of Article IV of the NPT, which allows them the right to nuclear research.

— U.S. attempts to hijack the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - of which India is a member - and make it an instrument of American foreign policy.

The earth-moving activity, now under way in Pokaran, is, said to be linked to these discussions and the growing move to declare India a nuclear power.

Although sources in the Government emphasise that there are no plans for another test in Pokaran, they argue that any declaration will be "toothless" unless backed by the necessary infrastructure for such a claim.

"If an underground shaft used for lowering a nuclear weapon before a test is being cleaned out or new wiring is being done at the site, it does not mean that a bomb is about to be tested," said an official.

Sources also said it was important to develop delivery systems and other infrastructure, if the nuclear powers are to take India's claim - that it is keeping its nuclear options open - with any degree of seriousness.

Article Views Ties With PRC, U.S. 'Designs'

BK2912093595 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 28 Dec 95 p 8

[Article by Hiranmay Karlekar: "Sino-Indian Ties: the Third Dimension"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Visits by Mr Qiao Shi, one of the topmost leaders of China, in November, and several other important Chinese functionaries in December, underline the marked improvement that has occurred in India-China relations. Besides their economic benefits, the ties, given a strategic and trilateral dimension by Russia s inclusion in their ambit, can enable the three countries to resist American pressures.

Sino-American ties will remain tense over Taiwan, human rights issues and US designs in Central Asia. Mr Henry Kissinger's statement in Delhi in November, that India and the US had a common strategic interest in preventing Russia, China or Iran from dominating Central Asia for its hydrocarbon and energy resources, and should work out an equilibrium among Asian powers for peace and stability in the region, reflected a view current in Washington. While India is unlikely to oblige, China can hardly be complacent about the view. It indicates a desire to forestall any challenge to the US's sole superpower status by the emergence of a rival, which China can well become.

The US's attempts to browbeat New Delhi into signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) — stooping, in the process, to the level of engineering newspaper

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leaks about preparations for a nuclear test in Pokhran — and abandoning its missile programme, indicate its unwillingness to allow India to have an adequate defence capability, to say nothing of this country's emergence as a superpower. The argument that it is doing so to prevent an arms race in the subcontinent, is unconvincing given its blatant indulgence to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes and its decision to sell $ 368 million worth of military hardware to Islamabad after granting it a one-time exemption from the scope of the Pressler amendment. Mr S.B. Chavan's remark about the US's evil designs on Kashmir cannot clearly be shrugged away.

Russia has the military ability to rival the US and may well try to do so following the electoral success of the communists and nationalists. Hence, the US government's foreign policy goals remaining unchanged; its relations with China, India and Russia are likely to become increasingly adversarial. This makes for a convergence in Indian, Chinese and Russian interest in countering the US — and also Pakistan. The latter's bid to dominate Central Asia through fundamentalist Islamic forces like the Taleban in Afghanistan, menaces them besides the Central Asian republics. Beijing is worried about secessionist Islamic fundamentalists in Xinjiang. Russia troops are fighting them in Tajikistan. Success in Afghanistan and Central Asia will enable Pakistan to throw a large section of the Taleban into Kashmir.

Sino-Russian relations have been on the ups win and are likely to improve further. Russia's vicissitudes in recent years notwithstanding, its ties with India remain strong and will become stronger with the waxing of the communists and nationalists. Indo- Russian military cooperation, including the cryogenic rocket engine deal, has been revived; Russia's efforts to persuade Ukraine not to sell military hardware to Pakistan, underline its continued reliability as an ally.

Though vastly improved, Sino-Indian relations have still a long way to go to include a strategic dimension. Continued mutual reassurance is required on several critical issues. The border dispute has not prevented ties from improving, and need not.

Largely, it caused bitter acrimony because China believed especially after the 1959 revolution Tibet and New Delhi's granting of refuge to the Dalai Lama, that India was collaborating with the US and the Soviet Union against it. It had accused India of interfering in Tibet and, in the aftermath of the 1962 border clashes, of training and arming the Khampa rebels. India's willingness to improve ties, its independent foreign policy and scrupulously correct attitude towards the Dalai Lama, have obviously changed Beijing's perception.

There remains the question of Pakistan and Myanmar [Burma]. Beijing has reportedly provided Islamabad with the design for a 25 kiloton implosion device and enough weapons-grade uranium to make two nuclear bombs. It is helping Pakistan's nuclear programme including the production of weapons-grade uranium. While claiming to adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime, it has supplied to Pakistan M-11 missiles (range: 300 km) considered capable of delivering nuclear warheads. Besides a large-scale provision of conventional military hardware to Pakistan, it is developing a multi-role combat aircraft with it.

While all this understandably causes misgivings in India, China, significantly, has shifted to a position of equidistance from India and Pakistan on Kashmir. Nor has it supported Pakistan's efforts to raise the issue of human rights in international forums. The pace and extent of Beijing's disengagement from Islamabad, which became a friend when its relations with New Delhi were hostile, will, however, depend on how its ties with India grow and how Pakistan behaves.

China has supplied substantial military hardware to Myanmar where it is developing roads and facilities which can be used militarily in India's flank. While this and the sharp increase in its defence budget to improve its capability in hi-tech warfare, is per se of concern to India, how things actually evolve will depend on this country's relations with Beijing as well as events in Myanmar affecting the ruling junta's fate.

India is now China's biggest trading partner in South Asia. Though a minute fraction of China's global trade, the total value of Sino-Indian trade, $ 895 million in 1994, has been increasing by roughly 30 per cent annually, and is expected to reach $1.2 to 1.3 billion in 1995. China's switch from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy has necessitated changes in its legal system to enable commercial adjudication, a refashioning of its banking system and tools of macro-economic control, and establishment of stock exchanges.

India's experience in these areas can be highly useful to Beijing. In an interview to the PTI in November Mr Jiang Zemin, China's President and General Secretary of its Communist Party, mentioned legal reforms as an area in which India can help his country. China, which is introducing merit-based recruitment to its civil services, can benefit from India's expertise in running civil services. A decision to cooperate in training civil servants has been taken.

Considerable scope for cooperation exists in fields like computer software, iron and steel, and power. Collaboration, involving India, China and South Korean

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manufacturing a commercial aircraft, is under way. Deepening economic ties can cause a qualitative change in Sino-Indian relations. Much, however, will depend on how China views its geo-strategic interests and India's security compulsions and stand on the CTBT, and how Pakistan and the US behave.

Much will also depend on the shape of politics in India after the next Lok Sabha elections, in China after the passing of Mr Deng Xiaoping, and in Russia after the June presidential elections — and on Moscow's ties with China and perception of its foreign policy goals. While keeping its options open, New Delhi should begin exploring the possibility of a triple entente among India, China and Russia especially since the US counter-proliferation doctrine sanctions pre-emptive military action against developing countries on the threshold of nuclear weapons capability.

Article Criticizes U.S. for 'Authoritarianism'

BK2812104595 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 27 Dec 95 p 8

[Article by Amulya Ganguli: "US in South Asia Tilt Against Democracy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After the demise of communism, the so-called rogue states in the current American lexicon are Iran Iraq, Libya and North Korea. To many in the Third World, however, the US itself is a prime candidate for this appellation largely because of its arrogant presumptions in doling out such titles in accordance with what suits or does not suit its strategic interests and its habit of threatening or meting out severe reprisals. India, too, has been warned about the "pain of punishment" that it might experience if it does not honour Washington's wishes on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty].

In India, the "ugly American" image has been reinforced by both the CTBT controversy and the US attitude towards Kashmir. If Pakistan's sponsoring of terrorism in Kashmir is an attempt to take revenge for the events of 1971, the US is probably seeking to achieve in the valley what the Seventh Fleet could not in the Bay of Bengal and the shores of East Pakistan a quarter of a century ago.

In adopting what is widely believed in this country to be an adversarial role, the US will be confronting, probably for the first time in recent years, a democratic country. This is a new development in that all its earlier adversaries such as the "evil empire" of communism or its present enemies such as Iran, Iraq, etc. have been, and are, undemocratic. This in itself gave the US something of a moral right to wage its crusades in support of the "free world" even if some of its allies were really no lovers of democracy, like Syngman Rhee or Lon Nol or Ferdinand Marcos or Yahya Khan or the Shah of Iran or the Duvaliers or General Pinochet or the pro-apartheid regime of South Africa.

Indeed, the US even formulated an intellectual justification for its support of authoritarianism as opposed to totalitarianism. No one expressed this philosophy better than a Secretary of State who described the Duvaliers colourfully as "sons of bitches" with the all important proviso that they were "our sons of bitches". The obvious thrust of this argument was that one could get away with anything as long as it served the American strategic interests. And since the menace of the evil empire threatened such interests, even an elected government as that of Salvador Allende in Chile could be expected to suffer the "pain of punishment" simply because the latter was supposedly a communist.

Except for that solitary exception of Allende, most of those to whom the US wanted to teach a lesson were totalitarians. Not so India. It is as much of an open society as the US or the countries of Western Europe, with an active if boisterous parliamentary system. an independent judiciary led by an apex court which has handed down some excellent judgments, a free press known for its vigour and a public life where almost anything is permissible. As Eric Hobsbawn has noted in his Age of Extremes, "India, of course, remains ... by far the most impressive example of a Third World state that has both maintained unbroken civilian supremacy and an unbroken succession of governments by regular and relatively honest popular elections". The customary American explanation, therefore, that it is intervening for the sake of freedom, will not wash.

India is not only a thriving democracy, it is also the home of an ancient civilisation and culture which has given its society as well as its democratic structure their remarkable stability and resilience. While the Western social system is almost falling apart under the strain of excessive individualism inspired by the pursuit of happiness, the Indian society has held together, despite the grinding poverty, as a result of the traditional social and familial values. Needless to say, it is also its civilisational stature which enables India to stand up to what it perceives as the bullying of an upstart.

The US is unused to such attitudes. In its simpleminded approach to the outside world, it tends to see everything in black and white. As John Foster Dulles put it with enviable clarity, you are either with us or against us. Ever since the New World came to the Old World's rescue during the two world wars, all the democracies have generally followed the American dictates and looked upon the US as their leader and protector. There

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have been occasional spats, of course, as over the berthing of nuclear warships in the southern hemisphere. But, by and large, the Western democracies and the smaller Asian countries have kowtowed to America.

Pakistan is a typical example in this respect. Its people. perhaps in common with their counterparts elsewhere in Asia, are widely believed to he anti-American, as an attack on the US embassy some years ago demonstrated. One of its military leaders found the overbearing American attitude rather too much to swallow and advised Washington to be a friend and not a master. It may well be that this latent anti-American feeling persuades some governments, including that of India, to take a stand which they otherwise would not have. In any event, there is little doubt that the present Pakistani establishment is happy to serve as the cat's paw of the US in the region as long as Washington helps it to fulfil its long-held grudges against India.

It is this kind of a subservient attitude among its allies, bred over the long years of the Cold War when the US used the bogey of the Red Menace to extend its influence, which made it easy for Washington to hustle through the "agreement" on the Non- Proliferation Treaty [NPT] earlier this year, although it was clear as daylight that its one and only purpose was to legitimise for all time to come the nuclear hegemony of the Big Five. In fact, given the declining prowesses of Britain, France and Russia, and China's uncertain status, the NPT's indefinite extension will effectively mean confirming America's ultimate superiority, made all the more menacing by the avowal of its readiness to launch a nuclear attack on a non-nuclear power, if the need arises.

If the two American allies—Israel and Pakistan which stayed away from the NPT conference—are excluded, India remains the only country never to have been in the American orbit which ignored the New York meeting. And it has now compounded its sin in American eyes by adopting an intransigent stand against CTBT unless it is linked to universal nuclear disarmament, a step which will deny the US its cherished nuclear monopoly.

But that is not India's only fault. As the initiator of the non-aligned movement, India—along with Egypt and former Yugoslavia—played a leading role in organising an anti-American line-up during the cold war. The NAM still survives and occasionally adopt inconvenient resolutions. Of the three original sinners, Egypt has recanted and joined the American camp while Yugoslavia has disappeared. Only India remains (although its one-time friend and ally, the Soviet Union, has also disappeared), holding out against the US—the sole superpower and arbiter of the world's destiny.

The US has fought both just wars and unjust wars, probably more of the former. But some of its unjust wars, and consequent defeats, have been spectacular, as in Vietnam where, according to Gen. Colin Powell, the American political leadership had led the soldiers "into a war for the one-size-fits-all rationale of anti-communism, which was only a partial fit in Vietnam where the war had its own historical roots in nationalism, anti-colonialism and civil strife beyond the East-West conflict".

The US has to be careful, therefore, about its South Asian game plan of supporting an essentially Islamic fundamentalist regime functioning under a thin democratic veneer (even the US is wary of backing an army general these days) against a full-fledged democracy, to with a proud record of anti-colonial struggle and wedded to secularism, for no other reason than securing a foothold in the region. But like nationalism, democracy is too potent a force to undermine.

Foreign Trading Houses Allowed 'Fully-Owned' Status

BK2812144395 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 21 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Shubham Mukherjee]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a policy initiative to attract foreign investment, the government has decided to allow foreign majors to set up fully-owned trading companies.

At present the government allows foreign investment up to 51 per cent in trading companies on an automatic basis. As per this policy, wholly-owned trading subsidiaries would be permitted to operate in India, exclusively for export or import-related activities and inward investments relating to various sectors of production or infrastructure development.

The existing trading multinationals in India will also be allowed to increase their stake to 100 per cent. Sources said the step is being taken to encourage large trading houses to set up shops in India.

Moreover, 100 per cent subsidiaries of trading houses may not be allowed to participate in domestic trade except as joint ventures with Indian trading houses.

Trading houses, however, will have to spell out their corporate plan for the next five years, their broad programme for exports and investments in export manufacturing if any and intentions to undertake activities relating to development of quality, brand-image, product development and R&D [research and development].

As of now about six foreign trading companies have received the government approval to set up wholly-owned

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subsidiaries in the country which include Bestsellers Limited of Scandinavia, Ikea Trading Limited of Hong Kong and Amway Corporation of the United States.

But these trading houses have been given permission on a case-by- case basis.

There are over 100 applications pending with the government seeking approval to set up fully-owned trading companies.

According to sources, concerns of domestic trading companies have been taken into account while formulating these policy measures and are said to be "tempered with caution" so as not to hit the domestic companies adversely.

The move acquires significance on two counts as the decision comes at a time when the nation is preparing for the forthcoming polls and the sizeable foreign direct investment that such a move could attract.

Informed sources point out that the Indian government is specially targeting the Japanese trading giants like Marubeni, Mitsui, Itochu, Nissho Iwai, Sumitomo etc with these policy changes.

Most of these companies already have representative offices in the country.

The advantage of a foreign trading company with 100 per cent equity would acrue from the availability of highly professional marketing expertise, use of existing foreign offices as an instantly available infrastructure for market intelligence and contacts, increase in Indian exports.

It would also encourage foreign investors confidence in India and act as a catalyst for further foreign investment in India.

Earlier various companies were mailed questionnaires by the government seeking their views on the proposed measures.

While most of the FIPB [expansion unknown] approved foreign companies did not bother to get back to the government on the issue, some Indian companies reflected extreme views on the issue.

While some agreed on the need for 100 per cent-owned subsidiaries for foreign trading companies, for exports and imports and trade in DTA [expansion unknown], some said it should be allowed only for export related activities.

There were still others who felt that there was no need for 100 per cent owned subsidiaries for foreign trading houses.

IRS-1C Remote Sensing Satellite 'in Perfect Health'

BK2912033795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country's second-generation remote sensing satellite, IRS-1C, which was successfully launched yesterday, is in perfect health. The satellite at 817-km polar sun-synchronous orbit is being continuously monitored by the control center of the ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] at Bangalore with the support of a network of tracking stations in India and abroad. The cameras of the 1,250-kg IRS-1C are likely to be switched on in a week or two.

Congress Leaders Charged for Alleged Involvement in Riots

BK2912035895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Delhi chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, has said that cases of murder have been registered against the former union minister, Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, and the Congress-I MP, Mr. Sajjan Kumar, for their alleged involvement in the 1984 riots [anti-Sikh riots following assassination of Indira Gandhi]. The case against Mr. Bhagat has been handed over to the Delhi Police for investigation, while six cases are pending against Mr. Sajjan Kumar in court. Mr. Khurana said in New Delhi this morning that a similar case against the union minister, Mr. Jagdish Tytler, was dropped earlier. The chief minister said 46 persons have already been prosecuted for their involvement in the riots.

Political Party Leaders View Election Alliance

BK2912035995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ms. Jayalalitha says the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] will fight the next elections to the [Tamil Nadu] state assembly on its own. She said her party will not enter into electoral alliance with any other party. She was intervening in a debate on the government's motion on the Cauveri [river] water dispute in the assembly yesterday.

The President of the Samajwadi Party, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, has said his party will not have any alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party in the coming Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha [state legislative assembly] elections. He said this at the end of the two-day state-level convention of the party in Lucknow. Mr. Yadav said his party will enter into an electoral alliance with the left parties and the Janata Dal.

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Editorial Explains 'Mystifying' Decline in Inflation

BK2912085495 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 28 Dec 95 p 15

[Editorial: "Mysteriously Declining Inflation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For a monetarist who skims the data on prices and money supply, the remarkable story of the decline in inflation in the current fiscal year, on the sheer strength of select numbers, is quite simple. The growth of money supply has been reined in successfully and, as a consequence, the rate of inflation is declining. For others, the trend decline is not easy to comprehend or interpret. Indeed, the slower rise in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), when seen in relation to the other series of statistics on inflation, is mystifying.

There are four official indices of inflation. At the wholesale level, inflation is measured as the rate of change in the WPI based on 447 commodities. This index broadly corresponds to producers' prices. The other three indices relate to retail prices. In recognition of differences in the consumption basket of different segments of the working population, the government computes the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for industrial workers, urban non manual employees and agricultural labourers, separately.

On the latest available estimates, the WPI has reached a record low of 6.9 per cent this year. Nevertheless, the declining trend in the rate of inflation based on WPI had started early this fiscal year and has continued. On the other hand, the average consumer prices have increased rapidly. During July and August 1995, the CPI for industrial workers was about 11 per cent higher than in the corresponding period last year. The CPI for agricultural lab our was 14 per cent higher. The latest available figures show that all three cost-of-living indices are still above 10 per cent — the rate of increase in the index for agricultural labourers is still close to 13 per cent.

This is a rather curious pattern. Every single factor that could have contributed to keeping prices down — money supply, administered prices of major products, and the issue prices of food grains — should have had a greater impact on the CPI than on the WPI. One of the most important reasons for the low rate of inflation is that the issue prices of food grains has been kept virtually at the same level as last year. Given that the weight of food grains and other food articles is much higher in the CPI than in the WPI the decline in the former should have been, if anything, steeper than in the latter. Yet exactly the obverse has happened. The CPI continues in double digits and, more significantly, is increasing while deceleration and then a decline has occurred in the WPI.

Admittedly, the rate of inflation based on the WPI is not comparable with that of the CPI. The prices of 80 per cent of the commodities included in the WPI are formed in the non monetary sphere on the basis of raw materials, food, cost of imported inputs, budgetary levies or administered prices. In terms of composition, the WPI includes prices of raw material and investment goods in addition to food products; the CPI includes only consumption goods. Even though the rates may not be comparable, the trends in these indices can scarcely be expected to be different and have rarely been so the past. The direction, if not the extent of change in the WPI and the CPI has always been the same. That is why the current mismatch in the trend behaviour of the WPI and the three variants of the CPI point to the unrepresentative nature, as far the bulk of the population is concerned, of inflation based on the WPI.

Editorial Issues Warning on Inflation Rate

BK2912092595 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 28 Dec 95 p 11

[Editorial: "The Misleading Graph"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The decline in the inflation rate to 6.93 per cent on a point to point basis, the lowest in the past 118 weeks, will no doubt gladden hearts in the North Block. Without questioning the veracity of the figures in a strict technical sense, it must still be asked whether it is fair to expect the citizens to judge inflation in a notional sense. Ask a housewife, and she will vouchsafe for the fact that she sees, and saw, no changes in the prices now or during the past 37 weeks when the graph has been consistently below the double-digit figure. Pundits have attributed to the falling price level the Reserve Bank's tight money policy which, incidentally, is also said to have created the current liquidity crunch in the economy. That may be only partly true, for figures reveal that non-food credit at Rs 26,000 crore-plus is more than Rs 10,000 crore compared to last year. The other indicator which suggests that a tight money policy alone will now stem the decline of the rupee's purchasing power is its steady erosion against the US dollar. Some foreign experts have predicted, on the basis of their earlier correct projections, that by March next year the rupee will be weakened further to trade at Rs 35.40 to a dollar. The slide of inflation on paper and the onward march of economic reforms has spawned the satirical query whether "global prices" can be welcomed while wages remain very largely Indian.

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It is not a matter to be ignored that a sub-committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party has in a study expressed dissatisfaction at the Government's inability to hold the price line, its worry is understandable in the context of the party leader's advice to the MPs [Members of Parliament] to go to their constituencies and highlight the government's achievements. How could that be done against the express promise contained in the party's 1991 election manifesto that the rising prices would not only be checked but rolled back to the 1990 level? The problem has only been aggravated since the Rao Government took office, and it cannot be resolved and people assured through statistical mastery. The fight against inflation must be more clearly seen and understood at a popular level, even if it is necessary to amend the methods of computation, change the basket of commodities and the weight age assigned to them, and have separate price indices for regions as diverse as metropolitan centres, small towns and the vast countryside. Economic reforms have created islands of prosperity, and the government cannot indefinitely hope to ward off social unrest through routine monetary measures to tackle ad hoc situations, and by using supply side management. Despite what one sees on the graph, there is a hidden and crushing inflationary pressure at work.

Over 4,000 Tribal Militants Surrender in Tripura

BK2912093395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Tripura, 106 tribal militants have surrendered to the authorities. According to a senior police official, they laid down their arms and ammunition before the additional subdivisional officer of Sadar at a simple function yesterday. With this, over 4,040 tribal militants of different outfits have surrendered to the state government so far.

The Assam government has urged the center to effectively seal the Indo-Bhutan international border to check the movement of militants from across the border. Official sources at Guwahati said the state has also requested the center to send some more companies of the Border Security Force to intensify vigilance in the area.

Iran

First Correspondent Allowed To Visit Nuclear Plant

AU2912113595 Munich ARD Television Network in German 2130 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Report by Dieter Sauter]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] In 1975 the German Siemens concern started to construct the nuclear power plants near Bushehr in the Persian Gulf. Two Biblis-type light-water reactors were to be built. After the fall of the Shah and the assumption of power by the mullahs, Siemens canceled the contract in 1979. Construction work was stopped. Iran filed a complaint and the International Trade Chamber in Paris ruled that it was right, but the Federal Government denied Siemens the required export permits. Thus, the plant continued to decay. In January this year, Iran and Russia concluded an agreement. The Russians will now complete the plant in Bushehr for $800 million, in spite of U.S. protests. According to reports from Jerusalem, Israel is afraid that Iran might have a primitive atomic bomb by the year 2001. For the first time a correspondent has now been permitted to film in Bushehr. Dieter Sauter was allowed to watch the Russian engineers at work.

[Sauter] The building has been rotting away since 1979 — that is for over 15 years — near the town Bushehr in the Persian Gulf. In 1974, the Siemens Kraftwerk Union company started to construct a nuclear power plant. The Shah wanted to have 23 such plants built. Today one can only see empty corridors and halls. Siemens stopped the construction completely after the beginning of the Islamic Revolution.

In the corridor leading to the actual reactor, there are only parts of former installations that are fit for the scrap heap. In 1988, shortly before the end of the war between Iran and Iraq, the plants were also severely damaged by Saddam Husayn's fighter bombers. Russian experts are now unpacking the stored machine parts, which were supplied by Germany. The parts are being checked to see whether they can still be used. The actual reactor core has never been delivered. It is mostly pumps and other plant parts, to be used for operation near the reactor, that are there.

A total of 200 Russian experts have been in Bushehr during the past few months, and they are training the first Iranian employees of the future nuclear power plant. The technical details of old German devices are being explained. Above all, however, the Russian engineers are studying the old Siemens documents at a newly built administrative building. Preparations for the start of the construction have been under way for over eight months. The experts are also specialists for the military use of nuclear energy. Thus, Iran is directly linked with the Russian nuclear research, U.S. officials have warned. The engineers here claim to be experts for the construction of light-water reactors, and such a reactor is to be built in Bushehr, too.

The biggest problem is combining the old technology from Germany with the new technology. This would be much easier in cooperation with Siemens, the leading Russian engineer points out. However, so far they

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have not encountered any insuperable obstacles. He is convinced that he will soon be able to present a specific plan for the development of the plant.

In the meantime, the Iranian scientists are continuing their test series in a test reactor in Tehran. With its trade embargo, the United States wanted, above all, to achieve that Tehran no longer possesses the funds to further finance its nuclear program. In fact, the first down payment to Moscow has been delayed. Yet the impact of the trade boycott has been limited, particularly because the West European countries did not want to support Iran's isolation. Now the Iranian Government has promised Moscow the first sum by the end of the year. Then construction work could begin in Bushehr.

Joint Statement Stresses Relations With Russia

LD2812232795 Tehran IRNA in English 2304 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA — The Tehran-Moscow joint statement released here today at the end of the visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Davydov, stressed on the two countries' cooperation for promoting peace and stability of the region.

It said that talks between the two countries were held in an "atmosphere of friendship and sincerity" and hailed them as a "new and important phase" in bilateral relations.

Davydov, who led a high-ranking political-economic delegation, conferred with several senior Iranian officials during his three-day stay in Tehran, including the ministers of foreign affairs, oil, energy, armed forces logistics, finance and economic affairs, and the head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization.

The statement expressing pleasure with the growing relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, said the talks centred on bilateral cooperation in various fields including trade, economy, and the private and public sectors.

It added that the two countries decided to enter into long-term cooperation on the basis of mutual interests.

It said that Iran and Russia held close or similar views on regional and international issues, and in view of their common stand on the Caspian Sea, stress was made on the two countries's joint statement issued on October 30 in this regard.

Commentary Blasts U.S. Covert Action Budget

NC2912094495 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 13 Dec 95 p 16

[Political commentary: "The Islamic Republic of Iran—A Torturous Impasse for the United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the U.S. Congress called for a $18 million budget for covert operations to topple the Islamic Republic of Iran's [IRI] system. His vehement insistence that this sum be approved has caused an impasse and the suspension of the talks on the $28 million budget for the CIA and other U.S. intelligence and espionage organizations.

This is not the first time that the Speaker of the U.S. Congress has spoken of a need to topple the IRI and even asked for generous funding for his crazy aspirations. He has frequently expressed similar wishes in the past as well and has pressured U.S. administrative bodies and intelligence organizations

However, this time he appears to be very insistent, so much so that according to the LOS ANGELES TIMES he has linked the continuation of the discussion on the budget to his proposed budget for covert operations to topple the IRI government.

Gingrich is making demands—which contain nothing new, either in the manner of their presentation or implementation—at a time when— as he, as the Speaker of the House, is well aware—the U.S. embargo imposed by Clinton on the IRI has suffered a humiliating defeat. He insists on the need for operations to topple the Islamic system of Iran at a time when even in the United States political analysts and most former officials and politicians past and present are aware of the futility of pressuring the IRI or waging various campaigns against it.

The LOS ANGELES TIMES, the same newspaper that published Gingrich's remarks, adds in its report that the Clinton Administration and the Republican senators oppose the budget favored by Gingrich due to the ineffectiveness of such a proposal and because it strains U.S. relations with the Islamic countries. The paper explains that the United States has not achieved even the slightest success in its covert operations so far.

Therefore the question that arises is: What is the reason for this repetitive, unwise, and illogical insistence by U.S. officialdom? Why does the United States every once in a while try to solve its internal problems with unsuccessful and hostile policies toward the IRI?

Like their actions, the judgments and stances of the Americans probably do not conform to the realities of the world in which we live. The Americans snarl at one

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government and bestow their affection and kindness on another. They destroy some nations, while they hasten to assist other governments using all their economic and political might, propaganda, and even military force. In a country like that, perhaps they do not bother to justify or defend their thoughts, deeds, and writings to their public opinion. This is because their unlimited and undefined interests are the criteria for their actions and propaganda. Even the U.S. leaders have not been unanimous about defining these interests.

It is precisely for this reason that the speaker of the U.S. House considers covert operations against the IRI in the U.S. interest while the Clinton Administration views them as ineffective and harmful to its foreign policy.

The U.S. hierarchy's indignation with the IRI—which has prompted ludicrous threats and propaganda against the IRI—stems in part from the 17-years of strategic defeat the United States has suffered at the hands of the Islamic Revolution.

The fact is that in the course of the past 17 years, the Americans have never for a single moment ceased their animosity, malevolence, and adventurism against the Islamic Revolution. They have affirmed this policy with various kinds of pressures, political and economic restrictions, military intervention, support for terrorism, and the perpetration of miscellaneous heinous atrocities against the Iranian nation.

On the other hand, they feel there is a dire need for them to forge relations with Islamic Iran. This has been manifested in various ways, such as their political and diplomatic stances, their direct and indirect requests, and by their dispatch of various emissaries. Washington feels that for the past seven years it has sustained losses that are getting out of hand and has lagged behind its Western rivals in economic relations with Iran. Therefore, it has spared no effort in urging its allies to sever or minimize their relations with Islamic Iran in general.

These efforts have probably proved futile as not a single government is prepared to sacrifice its national interests for ephemeral political reasons at the international level. This is especially true since most governments are aware that the Americans' political conduct regarding the IRI is solely based on personal vengeance for the past failures of their strategy toward the IRI. The U.S. military intervention at Tabas; attacks on Iranian oil wells, terminals, and tankers in the Persian Gulf; the downing of the Iranian airliner and killing its 300 innocent passengers are deeds that cannot be justified by any government on any logical basis whatsoever.

Today, no European government would support the U.S. Administration's providing of sanctuary to terrorists whose hands are stained with the blood of thousands of old and young men and women.

Support for unbridled terrorism even inside Iran; air piracy; backing unsuccessful coupist networks; extensive military, propaganda, and financial assistance for the corrupt Baghdad regime during its eight years of war and crimes against the IRI; and recently the massive and dynamic efforts to impose the so-called economic embargo on Islamic Iran—all these acts show sheer malice and obstinacy that are condemned by all recognized international standards. The Americans realize that in this horrifying and stupid feud they are completely alone and isolated.

The grim and foolish proposal of the speaker of the House regarding the IRI is another manifestation of this isolation. The Americans feel that Islamic Iran constitutes an obstacle to the attainment of their aspirations, and the doors that they knock on remain closed to them.

Ayatollah Condemns U.S. Moves To 'Interfere'

LD2712114695 Tehran IRNA in English 1124 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Tehran Prov., Dec. 27, IRNA — Head of Assembly of Experts, Ayatollah 'Ali Meshkini, here Tuesday condemned U.S. moves to interfere in internal affairs of Iran.

The ayatollah further added that such efforts are definitely doomed to fail.

The U.S. Congress by setting a budget for sabotage activities against Iran further revealed hostility of the "satanic power" towards the Government and the Muslim nation of Iran, Ayatollah Meshkini added.

Khamene'i: U.S. Seeks Servility in Other Nations

LD2612135695

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian at 1105 GMT on 26 December carries a 51-minute speech by 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution to a gathering of Islamic Republic Guards Corps [IRGC] personnel today. He started his speech by praising the IRGC and then speaking at length about Imam Husayn, the third Shi'ah Imam. In particular, Khamene'i focused on the question of why Imam Husayn, who was such a pure, spiritual, beloved person and a grandson of the Prophet was martyred in such a brutal way, and what lessons could be learned from this.

Khamene'i's answer to his own question was twofold: First, the society in which Imam Husayn was living

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became too materialistic and corrupt and, second, the "camp of justice" at that time did not have the required unity, coordination, and organization and had, therefore rapidly developed a sense of weakness and defeat in the face of attack. The lessons to be learned were that Iran must continue its path of spirituality and continue to "propagate virtue and prohibit vice." It must also maintain unity and show steadfastness before all attacks. Khamene'i cited as an excellent example Khomeyni, who had "stood fast like a mountain" and emerged victorious.

In the closing 10 minutes of his speech, Khamene'i referred to the continuing U.S. measures against Iran and said that the United States wanted to see nothing but servility in other nations. The United States wanted Iran to say it had made a mistake but Iran would never do so. The Iranian nation would continue to stand fast "like a mountain."

Judiciary Chief Warns U.S. Against Actions

LD2512173995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At a session of the country's Judiciary officials today, Judiciary Head Mohammad Yazdi described as overt interference in other countries' affairs the action by the U.S. Congress and Administration in approving the budget for sabotaging and combating the lawful and popular government in Iran. While condemning that terrorist action he warned the U.S. President about the consequences of that rash action.

He said: Various representatives of international forums and organizations have been visiting our country on special assignments these days, and have been investigating various issues, such as freedom of speech and religious matters, in Iran. We are certain that the outcome of realistic investigations by those representatives will show that human rights, in its true sense, is one of the goals of the holy, divine and popular system of Iran.

At the meeting the Judiciary Head approved a proposal by the Justice Minister to set up an employment group at the judicial department of the Armed Forces and the State Inspector-General.

U.S. Influence on Human Rights Commission Viewed

LD2312130795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1103 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The UN General Assembly, during its concluding sessions, is discussing the issue of human rights violations in various countries of the world. [passage omitted] The Human Rights Commission, like other organs of the United Nations, is not immune from the major powers' influence. In recent years the commission has passed a number of resolutions, which mainly reflect the stances of the major powers.

Unfortunately the current world order dictates that the votes of the smaller member countries of the international organizations are exploited by the major powers to realize their objectives. For instance, the UN Security Council has five permanent members and 10 nonpermanent members. The latter are usually chosen from the ranks of those small countries which have no ambitions in the international arena. These countries are just happy to be represented in the international arena by taking a seat at the United Nations and by flying their flags in its courtyard. For example, in the wake of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, which led to genocide and to the massacre of thousands of people in Bosnia, the member countries of the UN Security Council trying to settle the problem included Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Djibouti, Rwanda, and Botswana.

The nonpermanent members of the Security Council always cast a positive vote for the council resolutions. This is because these poor and less-developed countries are hoping to win the support of such global organizations as the IMF and the World Bank. They also hope to attract aid from the countries which exploit their vote.

Every year the U.S. State Department releases a report which present figures on Washington's financial assistance to small countries and the level of their cooperation demonstrated at the General Assembly. The report is ratified annually by the U.S. Congress. Unfortunately, this sinister method is exploited to pass resolutions of the Human Rights Commission too. The world responds by ignoring these resolutions. Through these resolutions the major powers obtain a licence to put pressure on others. In fact such resolutions resemble those passed by the Security Council, which provide the excuse for interfering in the internal affairs of the independent states, by ignoring their right to determine their own destiny.

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U.S. 'Interference' Behind States' Fear of Tehran

NC2312080395 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 18 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Alliance With Iran, Surest Way To Prevent Foreign Interference"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Over the past couple of weeks Iran has sent the ball into the court of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. In the first instance, Iran agreed to conduct bilateral talks for removing a misunderstanding between Iran and one of the Shaykhdoms of the UAE. Recently, Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs, Hoseyn Sheykholeslam announced that Iran is ready to sign a non-aggression pact with the Arab states of the Persian Gulf to boost security and regional cooperation.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the United States has been attempting to impose its will on other countries with the assumption that it is the world's only superpower.

In the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf, the U.S. has augmented its military presence in order to play its oil card against its emerging post-Cold War economic rivals.

In order to justify its presence in the region the U.S. has inculcated a threat perception in the minds of the rulers of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. The U.S. has spared no effort in projecting Iran as a threat to the security of the Persian Gulf states. As a result, it has succeeded in augmenting its interference in regional affairs and sending a considerable amount of armaments to the region, turning it into an explosive spot on the map of the world.

The only alternative to U.S. interference in the region is regional cooperation and coordination. Iran has gone an extra mile for peace. Sheykholeslam statement on non-aggression pact is a sign that Iran is ready to sacrifice "individual interests" for the sake of "collective interests".

The ball is in the court of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. It is time they responded to Iran's sincere calls for regional cooperation, else they will have to take recourse in an arms build-up which will neither serve their national interests nor save them from any probable crisis, as it didn't in the wake of Iraq's aggression in Kuwait.

UAE's Opposition to Iran Blamed on U.S. Exploitation

NC2712220095 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Dec 95 p 3

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] I would like to ask if, during the shah's regimes, the small shaykhdoms of the Persian Gulf dared to stand up against Iran as they do now. Why don't we answer all these nonsensical remarks by the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] shaykh? Are we truly scared and terrified?

[SALAM] At that time, the shah was fully and entirely subservient to America. He was the implementor of the White House's orders in the region, and the shaykhs did not have permission to stand up against him. But today it is the voice of the great satan which is being heard from the mouths of these shaykhs who do things in order to justify the growing presence of America in the Persian Gulf. By dominating the region's oil, America wants to gain a powerful weapon to inflict pressure on the industrial countries that need this region's oil. America convinces Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other Persian Gulf shaykhs that the situation is unsafe. Thus sells its arms to them in exchange for oil as a result of which, it solves its economic problems and the stagnation of its military industries with peace of mind. And when necessary, it foments more wars which it uses to solve its own domestic crises.

But what the war-stricken countries gain is bloodshed, destruction, and the deepening of hostilities, which pave the way for the continuation of this vicious circle. Therefore, it is not the UAE that has stood up against Iran but America which exploits the UAE's ignorance in the worst possible way. And it is not the issue of the Iranian islands, but of oil, of American presence, of the final solution of the usurping Zionist regime's problem, of crushing the Islamic and freedom-seeking movements in the region, and of supporting reactionary regimes against independent and revolutionary governments. As for the question on whether "we are scared or terrified," the answer is: What can a nation, which has a record of eight years of sacred defense, be scared of? [passage omitted]

Peace Process Opponents Planning Talks in Tehran

TA2712153395 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 25 Dec 95 p 6

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources in Tehran announced that leaders of various Hizballah branches and the armed groups allied with it in more than 12 countries are

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expected to meet in Tehran to draw up a joint strategy to fight the Middle East peace process.

The meeting is expected to be held in January to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeyni's banishment from Iran. [passage omitted]

In addition to the delegations representing Hizballah branches, a number of radical Palestinian, Jordanian, Sudanese, Egyptian, and Algerian groups that receive financial and political support from Iran will also participate in the Tehran meeting.

Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, who is one of the closest aides to Iran's spiritual leader 'Ali Khamene'i, is the person in charge of preparations for this conference.

Tehran is expressing growing concern over the possibility that Syria and Israel will reach a peace agreement within the next few months. Therefore, it is eager to prepare Hizballah and other armed groups to confront this agreement.

Tehran is also greatly concerned about the defeat of armed groups in Algeria and Egypt, which some Iranian analysts consider a sign that the spread of radical movements in the region is being checked. [passage omitted]

Va'ezi Holds Talks With Russia's Chernyshev

LD2812093895 Tehran IRNA in English 0912 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA — The visiting Russian deputy foreign minister, Albert Chernyshev, said here Wednesday [27 December] night that he is satisfied with the growing trend of Iran-Russia relations and called for further consolidation and expansion of bilateral ties. Speaking in a meeting with Iranian deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs, Mahmud Va'ezi, the Russian official stressed that Moscow believes that bilateral relations should be comprehensive, long-term and on the basis of regional cooperation.

Chernyshev, who arrived here last Tuesday on a three-day visit, said that signing of long-term bilateral economic agreements and convening of the Tehran-Moscow joint economic commission will help further broaden bilateral relations. He assured that Moscow will fully honor all its commitments towards Tehran and pointed out that Iran-Russia relations are indepedent and cannot be affected by influence of a third country.

The Russian official also welcomed Iran's recent efforts to initiate a new round of multilateral cooperation in the region. He said Moscow is willing to join in the process. Turning to the Karabakh dispute, Chernyshev said that Iran in the light of its cordial relations with both Azerbaijan and Armenia could invite both sides to exercise more flexibility in settlement of the crisis and finding a solution acceptable to both sides.

Va'ezi said Tehran-Moscow bilateral relations are now moving in the right direction. He called for promoting and deepening of mutual political, cultural and economic relations. Emphasizing positive impact of regional cooperation in restoring peace and stability to the region, Va'ezi said that Tehran is willing to do utmost to settle the Karabakh dispute.

Both officials reiterated the need to formulate a legal regime for the Caspian Sea littoral states and called for a foreign ministerial session of the littoral states.

Chernyshev is currently here accompanying Russian deputy prime minister, Oleg Davydov, for economic talks with Iranian officials.

Discusses Tajik, Afghan Crises

LD2812221195 Tehran IRNA in English 2158 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi in his second round of talks here today with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Albert Chernyshev, discussed various regional issues such as Tajikistan and the Afghanistan problem.

Va'ezi regretted that the military operations in Tajikistan on the threshold of the fifth round of peace talks between the government and the opposition, were a factor for disturbing the atmosphere of the negotiations and said that "hopes for a peaceful end to the Tajik crisis should not be changed into disappointment."

He called for efforts to create the necessary atmosphere for holding the next meeting of the peace negotiations.

Chernyshev in response praised the Islamic Republic's "positive role" in peace efforts in Tajikistan and called for more Iranian assistance in this regard. Saying that he sees no military solution to the Tajik crisis the Russian Foreign Ministry official stressed the need for Tehran-Moscow cooperation to find a peaceful solution acceptable to the warring sides.

On Afghanistan, Va'ezi and Chernyshev agreed that fanning the crisis in that country was in favour of big outside powers, and they urged the different political groups in Afghanistan to avoid any measure which may cause foreign interference in regional affairs.

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Chernyshev is part of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Davydov's high-ranking political-economic delegation that arrived here on Wednesday on a three-day visit.

Immigrants Return to Afghanistan Via Southern Border

LD2612204795 Tehran IRNA in English 2030 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Dec. 26, IRNA — 1,360,000 Afghan immigrants have crossed the southern Iranian borders voluntarily to return to their country so far, said the Director General of the Foreign Nationals and Immigrants Affairs of the Iranian Interior Ministry, Ahmad Husseini, here Tuesday.

He added that since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar (beginning march 21), some 45,000 Afghanis who had illegally entered the Iranian soil, left here for their home through Qarqarak border point.

During the same period also over 11,000 Afghan immigrants left this province for Afghan Nimrooz Province through Milak border point in the provincial city of Zabul, he said.

The Iranian interior ministry official also disclosed that at present some 1.5 million Afghan immigrants are living in Iran.

OIC Secretary General on Assistance to Afghanistan

LD2712215595 Tehran IRNA in English 2133 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Pakistan, Dec. 27, IRNA — Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Countries Dr. Hamed Algabid in his meeting with the Iranian ambassador to Islamabad, Mehdi Akhondzadeh, here Wednesday appreciated Iran's help for peaceful solution of the crisis in Afghaninstan.

The Iranian ambassador presented a report to Algabid on recent efforts by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, for striking a peace between rival groups in Afghanistan.

He said the Islamic Republic believes that the plight of the Afghans can be ended only by peaceful negotiations between themselves. He added Iran would be ready to collaborate with the OIC for that purpose.

The meeting between the Iranian ambassador and Dr. Hamed Algabid was on the side of the current assembly of the permanent committee for scientific and technological cooperation between OIC member states which started here Tuesday.

Afghan Commerce Minister Says Trade Accord Still Valid

LD2712084895 Tehran IRNA in English 0709 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan Prov., Dec. 27, IRNA — The visiting Afghan minister of commerce, Hojatoleslam Alemi, said here Tuesday that the 1974 Tehran-Kabul trade agreement which was scrapped under the communist rule is valid.

He said that after the communist take over of Afghanistan, country's foreign trade relations were confined to Eastern block. After the Soviet pull out, because of the civil war the administration has been unable to review its relations with other countries, he told IRNA.

Alemi who is also the first deputy of Hezb-e Vahdat-e Islami (Islamic Unity Party) and a member of the Supreme Council of Afghan Government underlined that Kabul attaches great importance to its ties with Tehran and Islamic countries in general.

Tehran-Kabul joint economic commission has already been formed and will meet in the first opportunity to study ways of expanding bilateral economic relations, said the Afghan minister.

Rabbani Envoy To Meet With Heads of Afghan Groups

LD2412124795 Tehran IRNA in English 1134 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 24, IRNA — The representative of Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, Prof. Abd Ar-Rasul Sayef, is currently in Jalalabad, the capital city of Nangarhar Province, to meet with some of the heads of various factions in Afghanistan.

In a meeting yesterday with Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, the chief of the Mahaz-i-Melli-Islami (National Islamic Front) at the Torkham Region, Sayef, who is also the head of the Ittahad-I-Islami (Islamic Unity), discussed the current developments in this war-torn country.

The two sides exchanged views in connection with resolving the crises in Afghanistan, the transfer of power and the installation of a government representing all Afghan parties.

An informed source at the Ittahad-I-Islami said yesterday afternoon that Gailani was satisfied with his meeting with Sayef.

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Details of the meeting were not disclosed but it was said that Sayef, who is an ally of Rabbani, has been trying to encourage the parties that previously supported the Afghan regime, to cooperate closely with the government and to participate actively in the transitional government.

Sayef is also to meet the members of the Jihadi council in Nangarhar, Hizb-I Islami (Khalis) chief Maulvi Muhammad Yunus Khalis, and some heads of the Jalalabad-based groups.

Kuwaiti Commerce Minister Meets With Velayati

LD2612144095 Tehran IRNA in English 1413 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — Visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Hilal al-Mutayri, who is in Iran heading a high-ranking economic and commercial delegation, met with Iran's foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, on Tuesday.

The Kuwaiti minister said that to upgrade the level of commercial exchanges between the two countries, Kuwait has decided to transform the al-Shaykh's port into a free trade zone, providing notable facilities for Iranian traders.

Al-Mutayri expressed interest in expansion of exports and import between the two countries and hoped that the move will have favorable effects on expansion of mutual economic relations.

Iran's foreign minister welcomed expansion of relations between Iran and Kuwait in all areas, especially in commercial field, stressing that promotion of trade relations between the two countries can strengthen political relations.

Velayati said that building confidence among regional countries is necessary, adding that exchange of such delegations will undoubtedly contribute to the solidification of peace and security in the region.

Holds Talks With President

LD2612145695 Tehran IRNA in English 1421 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — Visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Hilal al-Mutayri here on Tuesday [26 December] conveyed the greetings of Amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jaber al-Ahmad al- Sabah to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Al-Mutayri said Iran-Kuwait historical friendship has prepared the ground for enhancing the level of cooperation and trade between the two nations.

The Kuwaiti minister appreciated Iran's stand towards Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent humanitarian aid of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Kuwaiti people and government.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the cultural and religious bonds between Iranian and Kuwaiti nations and the good neighbourly relations between the two countries have served to consolidate bilateral relations.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said cooperation between Iran and Kuwait in transit of goods, oil cooperation within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) are appropriate grounds for bilateral cooperation and that the diplomatic shuttle of the two countries' officials would help strengthen friendly relations between the two nations.

Comments on 'Excellent' Relations

LD2712150695 Tehran IRNA in English 1429 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 27, IRNA — Visiting Kuwaiti Commerce Minister Hilal al-Mutayri in a meeting with Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri here Wednesday [27 Decembe] termed Iran-Kuwait ties as "excellent".

Al-Mutayri lauded Iran's position towards Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Hojatoleslam Nateq-Nuri, referring to abundant commonalities shared by regional Muslim countries, said that warm and sincere ties among neighboring countries was the only way of establishing tranquility and security in the region.

However, he criticized recent stand of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) against Iran and said that only enemies would take advantage of such decisions.

The Majlis speaker called for Iranian experts' contribution to Kuwait's economic projects and for investment in each other's free ports.

Omani Parliament Speaker Arrives in Tehran

LD2512124595 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Ali al-Qatabi, Omani parliament speaker, headed a parliamentary delegation that arrived today in Tehran for a five-day official visit at the invitation of 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles. He was welcomed by Nateq-Nuri at the airport.

After arriving in Tehran, the Omani speaker of parliament expressed pleasure on visiting Iran and described

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it as a favorable opportunity to expand ties and cooperation between the two countries and nations of Iran and Oman. He added that our ties with Iran have always been on a very good level and based on friendship and mutual respect. He hoped that his meetings and talks with the high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran would result in further expansion of ties and an increase in cooperation.

Nateq-Nuri also stated that expansion of ties between the countries in the Persian Gulf region and their further solidarity could remove the doubts and ambiguities that are being created by our enemies in the region for their own political and economic ambitions.

The speaker of the Islamic Majles added that if there were no ties between the countries in the region — who are members of one family — or if their ties were weak, the satans, especially the great satan, America, will take advantage of this vacuum and create discord among the members of this family in order to justify its unlawful presence in the region and by plundering its oil and selling it war equipment and machinery.

Meets With President

LD2612120595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received 'Abdallah Bin-Ali al-Qatabi, the Omani parliament speaker.

Our correspondent reports that at the meeting the Omani parliament speaker conveyed the friendly greetings of the sultan of Oman to our president and stated the willingness and firm resolve of his country to expand cooperation and friendly ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He stated: "Taking into account Iran's important role in regional developments, Oman attaches great importance to its expansion of ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all spheres and considers the expansion of ties to be a guarantor of the stability of regional security."

He added that during the visit constructive and useful talks were conducted with the Islamic Republic of Iran's authorities on ways to expand cooperation, especially in parliamentary spheres.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani also conveyed friendly greetings to the sultan of Oman. He referred to the long standing relations and historical bonds between Iran and Oman and emphasized the need for continuation of exchanges of views and diplomatic meetings between the two countries.

Our country's president also mentioned the important role of the two countries' parliaments in paving the way for expansion of ties among countries in the entire region and in maintaining unity and cooperation, as well as contributing toward combating misleading propaganda and divisive actions.

Comments on Talks

LD2612152395 Tehran IRNA in English 1457 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — The visiting speaker of Oman's parliament in a meeting with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Tuesday said that his country attaches great importance to expansion of her ties with Iran in view of the latter's key role in the region.

The Omani official, 'Abdallah Bin-Ali al-Qatabi also conveyed the warm greetings of the Omani head of state Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, to President Rafsanjani as well as his condolences on the passing away of the president's mother.

Underlining the determination of Oman to expand cooperation and amicable relations with Iran, the Omani parliamentarian noted that during his stay in Tehran, he had constructive discussions with Iranian officials on ways and means for broadening of bilateral cooperation notably in parliamentary affairs.

Meanwhile, the Iranian president expressed his friendly greetings to the Omani sultan and referring to long standing friendly ties between the two countries and their historical ties, underscored the necessity of continued exchange of views and diplomatic delegations between the two countries.

The president, pointing to the important roles the parliaments of the two countries play in promoting relations between the two countries, said regional cooperation would serve to foil biased and devisive propaganda of the enemies.

Syrian Delegation Arrives for Trilateral Meeting

JN2612074495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran—Syrian-Iranian-Turkish meetings at the level of experts will begin in Tehran today.

The experts will study the agenda of the periodic ministerial meeting scheduled to be held in Ankara this spring.

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A Syrian delegation led by Assistant Foreign Minister Raslan 'Allush arrived in Tehran yesterday to participate in these meetings.

Habibi Calls Talks With Turkmen Officials 'Positive'

LD2312154095 Tehran IRNA in English 1438 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 23, IRNA — First-Vice President Hasan Habibi wound up his four-day official visit to Ashgabat and returned home on Saturday.

Habibi said upon his arrival that during his stay in the republic he had discussed settlement of banking disputes between the two countries.

Important regional and international issues were among other issues discussed with Turkmen officials, including President Saparmurad Niyazov, he said.

Habibi added that fortunately Iranian goods were in high demand in Turkmenistan and that new contracts were to be signed with the republic for sale of buses and certain other manufactured goods.

Elsewhere in his remarks he said that unfortunately, what made Iranian delegation sad was the news of the passing away of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's mother Hajieh Mahbibi Hashemi.

He added that President Niyazov had cabled a condolence message to Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani on that sad occasion.

Before his departure for Tehran, Habibi had a meeting with Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov Saturday when he termed the outcome of his visit to the republic as "very positive".

He said at the meeting that the two countries enjoyed high potentials for mutual cooperation under a sound joint planning.

He underlined the need for providing more banking facilities for Iranian traders residing in Turkmenistan, saying that economic stability and confidence building measures would guarantee continuation of economic co-operation and would raise volume of trade transactions between the two countries.

He said Iran and Turkmenistan held similar views on the Caspian Sea legal regime, trilateral cooperation with Russia and on Afghanistan and Tajikistan issues.

President Niyazov for his part appreciated Tehran, particularly President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for attaching special significance to expansion of relations with Ashgabat.

He said that Iran and Turkmenistan shared common historical and cultural bonds and that Turkmen officials were deeply interested in full-fledged expansion of their ties with Iran.

The Turkmen president said that cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan was based on friendship and trust, hoping for further promotion of bilateral ties in the future.

Niyazov called on Iran to put its agricultural expertise at the disposal of his country.

The two sides at the meeting signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation on expansion of Tehran-Ashgabat ties.

Velayati Comments on Recent Visit to Turkmenistan

LD2512215095 Tehran IRNA in English 2113 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati returned to Tehran today at the end of his visit to the neighbouring republic of Turkmenistan.

His visit to Ashkhabad was within the context of coordinative operations by Iran and Turkmenistan for a number of development projects affecting the two neighbours including a railraod that connects the holy city of Mashhad in Khorasan Province to Tajan in Turkmenistan through the border city of Sarakhs.

In Ashkhabad, the foreign minister of Iran and Turkmen officials, together with the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Pakistan's Shamshad Ahmad Khan, reviewed issues related to the next summit meet of ECO states and the projects of the organization.

In the second corrdinative committee of ECO in Ashkhabad cooperation between Iran and Central Asian states and the Commonwealth of Independent Nations were reviewed.

The committee in Ashkhabad had also reviewed the results of recent talks between the opposition groups and the government of Tajikistan with the mediation of the United Nations, Iran and Russia.

The ECO summit is to be held in Ashkhabad in 1996. The 10-member organization groups Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrghizistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Velayati said that Iran and Turkmenistan had agreed to inform Russia of their expectations for improving

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cooperation among the Caspian Sea states when the Turkmen President Safarmurad Niyazov visits Moscow.

Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, are the five littoral states of the Caspian, the world's largest inland sea.

Velayati concluded that Turkmenistan insists on remaining a neutral state in the region, and observed that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the first supporter of Turkmenistan's neutrality in the region.

Cabinet Approves Accords With Philippines, Georgia

LD2412222695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With the approval of the Islamic Republic of Iran's cabinet, the sum of 4,800 billion rials, drawn from the social welfare fund, has been allocated, in the form of direct payments, to low-income groups for their monthly basic needs. [passage omitted]

The Cabinet approved the proposed bills for two agreements on trade between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Philippines, and cultural-scientific and training cooperation between the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and that of the Republic of Georgia. [passage omitted]

UN Envoy Protests Allied 'Violations' of Airspace

LD2012104795 Tehran IRNA in English 0748 GMT 20 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, Dec. 20, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran once again objected to the disturbing situation where the airplanes of the allied forces operating in Iraq violated the airspace of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Iraqi border.

The permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Kamal Kharrazi, in a letter to the secretary general of the United Nations, Butrus Butrus-Ghali described the air violations of Iran's airspace as "disturbing" and called upon him to take appropriate measures to stop such practices.

Flight of fighters, investigation and spying airplanes of the allied forces particularly of the U.S. in Iraq airspace is continuing since the end of the Persian Gulf war.

The Baghdad government has repeatedly reported the cases to the United Nations and asked for stopping of these practices, believing that these measures violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The letter which was circulated as a document of the Security Council, pointed to four cases of air violation launched by the allied forces on Iran-Iraq southern borderline from July 12- September 30, 1995. The letter also indicated the date and time of every aggressions, routes, speed, number and all details of the fighters' flight.

This is the second time since the end of the Persian Gulf war in spring 1991 that Iran is reporting the UN about cases of air violation by the allied forces over Iran's airspace. Kharrazi, for the first time on November 1995 sent a similar letter to Ghali and objected to the air aggressions carried out by the allied forces on Iran-Iraq western, southwestern and southern common borders and the Persian Gulf waters.

President Congratulates Niyazov on UN Vote

LD1912120295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has sent a message to Mr. Saparmyrat Niyazov, the president of Turkmenistan, to express congratulations for the UN General Assembly's approval of Turkmenistan's neutral status.

Part of the message states that the presence of a neutral Turkmenistan on Iranian borders will create even more grounds for cooperation between the two countries with the aim of bringing about a reign of peace and stability in the region. It will also ensure the further expansion of friendly political, economic, and cultural relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan.

Ankara Envoy Promotes Ties With Turkey

LD2612222695 Tehran IRNA in English 2216 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Dec. 26, IRNA — Iranian Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad-Reza Baqeri here today called for further promotion of Tehran-Ankara trade and economic relations as well as the expansion of cooperation between the two countries' private sectors.

In an interview with "DUNYA", an Istanbul based economic daily the Iranian ambassador also announced that some barriers should be removed from the way of the two countries' trade and economic relations.

Assessing the volume of Iran-Turkey trade exchange at $2 billion after the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, he said that the volume of the trade exchange used to be at some $50 million during the pre-Islamic revolution period.

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Referring to the importance of the Iranian markets Baqeri added that over one billion dollars of foreign investments were made in country during the last Iranian calendar year (ending march 20). He also said that at present some 250 foreign investment projects are under review.

Also referring to the importance of Iran from the point of view of transiting goods, the Iranian official pointed out that there existed no restriction for the trucks and trailer-trucks passing through Iranian borders.

He said that the current problems at the two countries' border points are mainly the results of obstacles existing in the neighboring borders of Central Asian republics.

At the end of his interview Baqeri attached great importance to the setting up of various trade exhibitions, the establishment of the links between Iranian and Turkish chambers of commerce and industries as well as the arrangement of regular contact between the representatives of the private sectors from two sides. He believed that such measures would boost up trade and economic relations.

African Diplomats Graduate From Training Center

LD1812221695 Tehran IRNA in English 2208 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA — A graduation ceremony marking the conclusion of the 12th political and expert training course for diplomats from Mozambique, Uganda and Namibia was held here today in the presence of with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and other ministry officials.

Eleven diplomats from the three African states attended the 45- day training course held at the Foreign Ministry's centre for diplomatic training.

Addressing the ceremony Velayati said that promoting ties and solidarity with the Third World particularly with African countries, were among the principles of Iran's foreign policy.

He added that setting up of a centre in Iran was providing training to diplomats of friendly and neighbouring countries, is a positive step towards achieving a common understanding.

At the end of the ceremony the Iranian foreign minister presented the graduating diplomats with diplomas and prizes.

President, Nigerian Envoy Discuss Cooperation

LD2512120295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Esto Amr Sanda Endayako [name as heard], special envoy of the head of state of the Nigerian federal government.

The special envoy of the Nigerian Government presented a written message and conveyed the condolences of General Sani Abacha, head of the state of Nigerian federal government, to president Hashemi- Rafsanjani on the demise of his esteemed mother. He praised Iran's principled policies to expand Islamic ties and to support the deprived countries in the Third World, especially those on the African continent.

The Nigerian special envoy presented a report on developments and the internal situation in his country and called for expansion of ties and bilateral cooperation between the two countries, especially using the technology and technical and engineering services in the oil field of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President Hashemi-Rafasanjani also expressed interest in expanding ties with Nigeria on the basis that a large portion of that country's population is Muslim and said: Taking into account the sufferings inflicted on the Nigerian nation during the long period of colonial rule, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate to eliminate the effects of colonization and contribute toward independence of that country.

Referring to the huge resources of oil in Nigeria, our country's president stated that taking into account Iran's independence and valuable technical and engineering in the oil and petrochemical industries, our country's experts could help Nigeria to achieve industrial independence and expand its scientific and technical training in the oil industry.

Closer Ties to Arab States Urged for Prosperity

NC2312075995 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Arab States of the Persian Gulf Should Participate in Regional Cooperation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Owing to its geopolitical location, Iran has virtually become the hub of regional cooperation.

Iran's geopolitical resources, intrinsic as well as extrinsic, have played a crucial role in assigning it a key role in regional development. It has one of the world's largest oil and gas reserves and a number of other rare

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minerals. It is a bridge between Asia and Europe. It links the Persian Gulf to the Caspian, the Mediterranean and the Black Seas. It connects the Indian Ocean region to Central Asian and Caucasia.

Practically Iran is the most stable country in its region. It has close and friendly relations with all neighboring states. As a result Iran has been able to enter into several bilateral and multilateral agreements with its neighbors paving the way for boosting regional cooperation.

The latest such agreements is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Iran and Turkey on road, air and railway transportation Tuesday [12 December]. The MOU, in addition to preparing the ground for expansion of mutual cooperation, practically facilitates transit of goods and services from the Persian Gulf region to Europe.

Our neighbors in the north, east and west have realized the key role that Iran plays in regional development. Thus far our brothers across the southern waters of the Persian Gulf have not been able to enter into a meaningful cooperation for regional development.

The petrodollars they gain through sale of depletable crude oil can play a decisive role in boosting regional development. The Persian Gulf Arab states will be the first beneficiaries of regional development in the long-run. If they stay away from regional development, they will be in trouble once their oil is totally depleted. Let's hope our brothers on the other side of the Persian Gulf join us in marching ahead for building up a prosperous region.

Minister Urges Muslims To Access New Technology

LD2612153395 Tehran IRNA in English
1453 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec, 26, IRNA — Iran on Tuesday [26 December] called on Islamic countries to draw up a new strategy to promote science and technology and to seek proper access to advanced technology.

Addressing the seventh meeting of OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Comstech), Hashemi-Golpayegani, minister of culture and higher education, said Islamic countries face numerous difficulties in having access to the advanced technology for their, "resources and qualified manpower are not properly employed."

He said that universities and research centres in the Muslim countries should, "stir up students, beyond education towards research, creativity and innovation," to meet needs of the ummah.

Elaborating suggestion for the promotion of science and technology in the member states of OIC, he called for regular publication of dissemination of results of the research conducted in the institutes of science in the Islamic countries, establishment of a network for rapid exchange of scientific and technological data among the OIC member states and a well thought-out planning to create complimentary instead of parallel technologies.

Moreover, he urged for joint projects in the fields of science and technology by the member states and holding of regular exhibition to display the achievements.

Apart from this, he proposed exchange of scientists, scholars, researchers and students to share the experiences of the Muslim countries in the field of science and technology.

IRGC Maneuvers 'Successfully' End in Persian Gulf

LD2612112895 Tehran IRNA in English
1056 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bushehr, Dec. 26, IRNA — The fourth and last stage of the 'Ra'd' (thunder) naval-missile maneuvers ended successfully in the Persian Gulf waters Tuesday [26 December].

The four-day maneuvers aimed at displaying the combat readiness and power of naval and missile units of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in defending the territories of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The maneuvers started Saturday in the area near Kharg island, northern part of the Persian Gulf in this southern province.

The commaders assessing all stages of the war games, described the maneuvers as successful.

IRGC Said Capable of Thwarting Any Threat

LD2612100495 Tehran IRNA in English
0942 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — Iran is not a war-monger, but does not permit any country, howsoever strong, to cast a covetous eye on its territory, a morning daily wrote in its editorial Tuesday.

Praising Iran's friendly ties and peaceful co-existence with all its neighbors, the English-language 'TEHRAN TIMES' stressed, "our enemies must have realized by now that they cannot annex a single inch of the Iranian territory since Iran's armed forces are the strongest in the region, enjoying the most solid social base."

Referring to numerous plots masterminded by different leftist groups, the terrorist Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) and the monarchists since the culmination

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of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the paper said that the late Imam Khomeyni, aware of the hard days to come, issued an order to form the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC).

Denouncing the Iraqi imposed war against Iran as well as the all- out support Iraq received from the powerful countries of the world, TEHRAN TIMES said that after the imposed war ended, the IRGC embarked on implementing development projects besides improving its defense capability.

"Today, the IRGC and the army are capable of thwarting any threat to Iran from any quarter," the paper concluded.

IRGC Naval Commander Outlines Forces' Achievements

LD2612140295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Naval Forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC] carry out around 40 to 50 maneuvers in the Persian Gulf waters and the Oman Sea evey year.

According to Rear Admiral Ahmadiyan, acting commander of the IRGC Naval Forces, the forces have achieved the science of making speed- boats, and, equipped with a number of Thunder-class [as heard] frigates with long-range missile launchers, is ready to combat any type of threat.

The acting commander of the IRGC Naval forces mentioned the successes of the forces' research and self-sufficiency organization and stated that 70 percent of all the equipment and requirements of the IRGC naval forces are being built inside the country by forces' experts.

He added that since 1368 [year began 21 March 1989] over 70 billion rials have been invested for building wave breakers, jetty and sea platforms.

Official Reports IRGC Undertakes Research Projects

LD2612143595 Tehran IRNA in English 1417 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has undertaken over 200 research projects, announced an IRGC official here on Tuesday.

Director of research and military self-sufficiency sector of IRGC, Mahmoud Shirazi, told IRNA that it is incumbent upon IRGC to preserve high-level standards of design and maintenance of military equipment at a time when developed countries are engaged in extensive efforts to manufacture sophisticated weapons to surpass other countries of the world.

He referred to the successful deployment of well-initiated projects of the research and self-sufficiency sector in the war fronts during the 8-year imposed war which resulted in many victorious military operations.

Noting the increase of research works in the aftermath of the imposed war, Shirazi said at present over 200 basic projects are under way at main research centers of IRGC including designing various types of vessels, aircraft, helicopter, tank modernization, manufacture of car engines and automobile, and electronics and telecommunication projects.

He also referred to the modernization of 'T-54' tank, part of which seized during the imposed war, within a 9-month period by the Iranian experts as another outstanding achievements of IRGC.

IRGC Major Contributor to Development Projects

LD2512142195 Tehran IRNA in English 1406 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) while preserving its combat readiness has contributed to more than 1,000 reconstruction projects in the aftermath of the 1980-88 sacred defense, said a high-ranking military official here Monday.

IRGC Acting Commander-in-chief Brigadier General Seyyed Rahim Safavi, speaking to reporters on the occasion of IRGC week (Dec. 20-26), said that IRGC is the major contractor of the government in development, industrial and military projects. He further added that in implementing the projects, IRGC offers highly efficient methods according to international standards with the minimum possible cost.

Referring to the extensive activities by IRGC in research and military fields in post-war era, General Safavi singled out modernization of 'Safir' tank.

According to him the tank by being equipped with a stabilizer device is now capable of hitting targets within a range of three kilometrs while in moving position.

He also said that IRGC has made great progress in making surface- to-surface ballistics missiles with a firing range of 500 km as well as surface-to-air 'Sum' missiles capable of hitting targets within a range of 200-km.

Pointing to scientific activities of IRGC, Safavi noted that at present some 12,000 IRGC students are attending

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courses in universities and in colleges affiliated to IRGC.

IRGC Exhibition Features Military Hardware

LD2412195195 Tehran IRNA in English 1829 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — On the eve of the birth anniversary of the lord of martyrs, Imam Husayn (peace upon him), celebrated as 'IRGC Day' in Islamic Iran, the first technical-engineering exhibition of the Islamic Republic Guards Corps (IRGC) opened here on Sunday.

Executive manager of the exhibition Major Hoseyn Nejat told IRNA that the display features IRGC capabilities in research, defence self-sufficiency, repairing and maintenance of military equipment, and economic reconstruction of the country. He noted that in the exhibition, IRGC's vast activities in the field of production of ammunition, electronic and telecommunication equipment and related devices are being put on show for the public.

Samples of military hardware repaired or reconstructed by the IRGC are also on display at the week-long exhibit and include various types of light and heavy vehicles, artillery pieces, road- making machinery and technical devices used by the Air Force, missile production units and telecommunication systems.

Nejat pointed to the active contribution of the IRGC in the country's reconstruction and development plans notably in the war- stricken and deprived parts in the aftermath of the 8-year Iraqi war (1980-88). He added that construction of different types of bridges, road and tunnel building, water and gas supply systems, dam construction and laying railroads, are included in IRGC programs of which pictures, films and prototypes are being exhibited.

Speaker on Role of Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps

LD2312161295 Tehran IRNA in English 1414 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 23, IRNA — Majles speaker Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here on Saturday, the economic development, progress and welfare have been made possible owing to the establishment of security in the country.

Speaking at a seminar on the role of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) in the national security and defence, Nateq- Nuri appreciated all those forces who have played a key role in establishing security in the country, particularly the IRGC personnel.

Nateq-Nuri said none of the countries of the world do enjoy so much social and individual security in political and economic areas as Iran does and that's why the enemies have time and again tried to deprive the people of security and subject the country to tension and chaos.

He describe the IRGC as an efficient force that has already played a great part in creating security and defending the country as well as in the economic development and reconstruction of Iran.

He said the warm welcome extended by the brave people of Kurdestan to President Rafsanjani was the result of the sacrifices made by the IRGC personnel in the region.

Nateq-Nuri said the U.S. is apparently a developed country with high technology, but the people living there are suffering from insecurity and anxiety and are leading a bitter life. The high number of crimes especially those perpetrated in U.S. schools indicates the tragic situation in American society, he said.

The two-day seminar on the role of the IRGC in the national security and defence is being held in Tehran.

Commander Says Tank Technology Imported Secretly

LD2312105495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dear listeners, today is Saturday, 23 December, which is the Day of Guards Corps, Defense, and Security. Our guest on the "My Land" program is Brigadier General Mohsen Reza'i, commander in chief of the Guards Corps. Mr. Reza'i, could you please explain the role played by the Guards Corps in rebuilding the country after the holy defense [Iran-Iraq war]?

[Begin Reza'i recording] In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful [passage omitted] One of the steps we have taken has been the modernization of our equipment. This is a step beyond repair of the equipment. It means we have been modernizing equipment that was over 10 to 20 years old. We have recently modernized a tank called Safir-74. This was part of a series of tanks manufactured in the eastern bloc. After modernizing this tank, we compared it with the T-72S tank. The latter is a modern tank manufactured by the [former] Soviet Union, from which we purchased this tank. It is being used both by the Guards Corps and Army brothers. We raced the two tanks. Our modernized tank can fire and hit targets more accurately than the T-72S tanks. It is so maneuverable that it can hit moving targets while it is in motion.

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Some of the technology needed for modernizing these tanks was imported in secret, despite all the sanctions America has imposed against us all over the world. God willing we will be able to manufacture all the eastern bloc tanks that we seized during the war with Iraq. We can modernize all the captured tanks, which is a considerable number. [passage omitted] [end recording]

IRGC Forces Reclaiming Obsolete Tanks

LD2112185795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The combat capabilities and operational capacities of the Guards Corps' T-54 tank, or the so-called Safir- 74, which has been modernized by the able and hardworking experts of the Center for Defense and Logistic Studies of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps [IRGC], was put on show in the presence of Brigadier Mohsen Reza'i, commander-in-chief of the Guards Corps, at the Ashura operational theater this afternoon.

The tank, with high combat capabilities, is a manifestation of mobility, firepower, precision, speed, and rapid reaction, as well as high capacity of maneuver at special and unforeseen circumstances.

At the end of the maneuver and in an exclusive interview with our reporter, Brigadier Reza'i pointed to the achievements of Islamic combatants during the eight years of sacred defense and the era of reconstruction and said that the capacity of the Safir-74 to maneuver and fire in various positions was the result of the ceaseless efforts of the pious and brave experts of the corps' center for defense studies and added that this was a symbol of the national will and power to achieve self-sufficiency in defense matters.

He referred to the fact that the method of reclaiming obsolete tanks and rebuilding them to relatively modern tanks resulted in significant savings in foreign currency and strengthened the motive for improving armored vehicles among the pious experts of Guards Corps.

IRGC's Role in Country's Security Outlined

LD2412201895 Tehran IRNA in English 2005 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has played a vital role in Iran's security in the aftermath of the Iraqi war (1980-88) through its active presence in the Persian Gulf and the southeastern and northwestern parts of the country, said Chief of the IRGC Ground Forces, Major Mohammad 'Ali Ja'fari today.

Ja'fari, presiding over a meeting on 'IRGC role in national security', underscored the necessity of maintaining the defensive readiness of the armed forces as well as the awareness of the Hezbollah masses, and said that strengthening of the armed forces and their combat readiness after the war was a vital factor in deterring enemies from doing any harm to the country.

Referring to the budget recently approved by the U.S. Congress to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said that no doubt such an effort would prove to be much less effective compared to the previous covert operations by the Americans against Iran.

He also mentioned that following the 8-year sacred defence, the IRGC has embarked on a vast campaign for equipping the armed forces with advanced military hardware of which samples are to be shown in the technical and engineering exhibition, which opened in Tehran today on the occasion of the IRGC week.

The birth anniversary of the lord of martyrs, Imam Husayn (peace upon him), is celebrated as IRGC day in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This year the auspicious day (Shaban 3) falls on December 26.

Jannati Asserts Council's Role in Election

LD2712120295 Tehran IRNA in English 1145 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 27, IRNA — The Guardian Council is the only organ entitled to supervise the elections and any supervision on the part of any other organ is prohibited, secretary of the Guardian Council, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said.

Speaking to the English-language daily TEHRAN TIMES published Wednesday, Ayatollah Jannati stressed that the special inspection team, set up by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to inspect the elections, is merely to provide the president with the information concerning the elections.

Commenting on the elections for the fifth Majlis, he said that there is no legal restriction on the activities of the inspection team, but any kind of supervision by the team will not be allowed.

As far as the special inspection team holds to the specified framework, its inspection will not overlap with the actual supervision by the Guardian Council, he noted.

On the Guardian Council's criteria for Majlis candidates, the ayatollah stated,"the criteria are the same as indicated by law and that there is no shift in the council's policy."

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Yet, he said, rejection of one's eligibility in the past does not necessarily mean that he cannot apply as a candidate for the fifth Majlis.

He reiterated that candidates' qualifications have been specified in the elections law and those who have the required qualifications can apply as candidates.

On the nomination of candidates affiliated to outlawed groups or parties, the ayatollah said, "they cannot run for elections. If the group has formally been declared outlawed no one can nominate himself as its candidate. There will be no restrictions on nomination of independent candidates."

Touching on the absolute supervision of the Guardian Council, he stated that the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also confirmed Guardian Council's absolute supervision.

He concluded by underlining that the Council's supervision is absolute and is applicable in all stages of the elections.

Commentary Criticizes Factional Bickering on Election

NC2512151095 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 16 Dec 95 p 2

[Commentary by Hoseyn Shari'atmadari: "The Meaning of Active Participation in Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Going to the polls and voting for one's favorite candidates does not just signify participation in the elections. Participating in the elections also entails national and religious obligations that extend far beyond the casting of one's vote.

Accordingly, one's responsibility is proportionate to one's obligations to the system and one's status in a particular society. Casting your vote is the bare minimum for such an obligation. [passage omitted]

One of the most salient features of an active role in the elections is the nomination of candidates. We know at a glance that the nomination of suitable and competent candidates (excluding those individuals who have been legally banned from candidacy due to certain logical reasons and higher interests) is everyone's obligation. In order to select the best possible individuals, the people need news and information.

Normally in the course of elections every person seeks individuals whom he considers trustworthy and seeks their attitude toward being nominated. Such information has always been reported and naturally it will continue to be so. However organizations and groups have a crucial and momentous responsibility in this regard. If they do not perform as they should, one can say that they have not discharged their national and religious obligation to participate in the elections as stressed by the late imam, may God be pleased with him.

One of the factions that did not obtain the required number of votes in the fourth [Majlis] elections, recently announced that it will not nominate any candidates but will participate actively in the elections. Its members seek to justify their recent stance with reasons that would need lengthy assessment, but the fact is that the announcement about actively participating in the elections while not nominating candidates is not just contradictory, the two concepts are diametrically opposed.

This is because if this faction—regardless of its reasons or viewpoint—has any doubts about the health and correctness of the elections—and if this is so, it is a very unjust view—then it should include voting as well. If this is not the case—and we know it is not—what is the reason for not nominating candidates? [passage omitted]

Ultimately it may be stated that this faction has some complaints and its members are annoyed at rival factions. That is why at present the general impression is that the propaganda organs are mostly at the disposal of the opposing faction. Of course, the veracity of this statement requires a more precise and multifaceted assessment. However, there are no complaints regarding the wishes and choices of the people. It is the forming of cliques and illegal and unjust efforts to eliminate one's rivals that should be monitored and rectified. Secondly, an approach based on a specific line and that subordinates the principles and regulations is not a one-sided or unprecedented phenomenon, but it is a shortcoming that will hopefully be rectified.

'Subtle But Extensive' Electioneering in Provinces

NC2512140295 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Report from the "For Your Information" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Election fever is peaking in the districts of Natanz, Ardestan, and Kashan. Unofficial canvassing by potential candidates in these districts is subtle but extensive. The potential candidates attend public ceremonies and inauguration ceremonies for development projects, meet rural residents, address official gatherings, and participate in memorial services held by influential families in these districts.

In Natanz 12 people have reportedly volunteered to be district representatives. In Ardestan and Kashan, 10 people have volunteered for the same job.

A prospective candidate for the Fifth Islamic Majles elections in Semnan Province is even publishing and

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disseminating a weekly. He hopes to stand as a candidate in the Majles elections for Damghan district. He was a candidate in the Fourth Majles elections but gained only 2,514 votes.

Public and news circles believe publications such as his are disseminated mainly for campaign purposes and will probably be suspended after the elections. [passage omitted]

Candidates Urged To Remember Social Justice

NC2312083295 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 19 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Assess Candidates on Basis of Social Justice"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With a few months left before the Majles elections and no political parties in the Iranian political arena, Iranian voters, candidates, and those who nominate candidates for Majles should bear certain points in mind in order to render the Fifth Majles fully in the service of the nation.

First of all, the three groups mentioned above should remember that Iran is in the middle of economic reforms on which President Hashemi-Rafsanjani government has embarked. Although continuity is an essential element in the process of development, on the pretext that changes might undermine the reform process, it should not preclude self-correction and rectifying past mistakes.

Social justice is an essential development plan. Development and social justice should go hand-in-hand in a country which has sacrificed tens of thousands of its youth in overthrowing an unjust dictatorship.

A candidate who believes in development, minus social justice, had better not run for office.

Since there is no party platform in the forthcoming elections, voters should assess the candidates on the basis of their commitment to social justice as one ingredient of a development plan.

If those who do not believe in social justice as an inseparable part of a development plan are eliminated from the Fifth Majles a congenial ground will be prepared for a balanced development of our country, enabling us to march towards economic self-reliance and political independence in the crosscurrent of cut-throat competition among multi-nationals for controlling the economies of developing countries, while holding their political independence hostage.

Larijani Says Nateq-Nuri Favored as JRM Candidate

LD1912151895 Tehran IRNA in English 1452 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA — "We have several people in the Velayat-e-Faqih (supreme jurisprudent) faction who are fully qualified for presidency," people's representative from shiraz, Dr. Mohammad Javad Ardeshir Larijani told IRAN NEWS recently.

A member of the Jame-e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM), Larijani added: "However, Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri is favored by the majority of people as JRM's candidate for presidency."

Responding to the question that "in the event that the JRM fail to capture the majority in the fifth Majlis, will Nateq-Nuri still enjoy popular support and be nominated as the group's presidential candidate", Larijani said: "a large number of our members strongly beleive that Hojatoleslam Nateq-Nuri must be nominated as the JRM candidate regardless of the fifth Majlis election results. Even if we fail to gain the majority in the consultative assembly he will be our candidate."

SALAM Officials Said Willing To Manage Country

NC2812101895 Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Dec 95 p 2

["Special Answer to a Telephone Call" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] People who call the "Hello SALAM" column and state their problems should not think that the officials of SALAM are against the government. They should know that SALAM officials' problems do not stem from any disagreement with the government, but from their wanting to take the rule into their own hands.

[SALAM] We see no reason to deny this dear reader's views. If we say we have decided not to take responsibility for running the country's affairs, then the only meaning behind all this criticism is that we want others to shoulder the responsibility of running the country while we go on acting as critics. No, this is not so. We are ready to take on the heaviest of chores on every management level in the country and to run the country on the basis of acceptable norms and our understanding of Islam and the Constitution. But we are never ready just to accept doing something and find canonical justifications for doing it. We do not consider ourselves to be the only pure Muslims and any other person or group that does not agree with all our thoughts and views to be void of religion. We are not ready to accuse our critics

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of being the mouthpiece of arrogance to hide our own weaknesses. [passage omitted]

Yes, we are ready to manage the country. But we are not ready to insult those who have suffered for the Islamic Revolution just to gain fame. But we are not sorry they removed the burden of responsibility from our shoulders against our will, because accepting these responsibilities only means that our duties become heavier and apprehension increases that we are approaching the day when we must answer for our every deed to God Almighty.

Commentary on Ayatollah Khamene'i Speech

LD2712210195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the Islamic revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, on Tuesday December 26th, on the auspicious birthday of Imam Hoseyn, household of the Prophet of Islam, delivered a significant speech. The leader's speech, which came concurrent with the Pasdar [Revolution Guard] Week in Islamic Iran, is a deep and profound look at the graceful and successful history of Islam.

The leader of the Islamic revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, described the life of Imam Hoseyn, filled with fight and combat against suppression and corruption and a great lesson for the world of Islam. The leader then called the secret to the everlasting values of the God's prophets the ongoing struggle against the wrong and not evading the fight, saying: Today the rule of the prophetic teachings prevails all over the world. This is due to untiring nature of the prophets and their presence in the arena of fight against the enemies.

Leader's speech is in fact a reference to the confrontations that exist between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the world arrogant powers. The combat has turned into a model for the freedom-loving states who are involved in the struggle against suppression. The Iranian nation's fight against America is known all over the world. Most politicians and economic experts have confessed to the defeat of United States against Islamic revolution. Iran, during the post- revolution era, has gained many great victories in the arena of diplomacy. As Iran managed to win the enemies who invaded the country, it is taken wide strides towards self-sufficiency and has proven that Iran can respond to its needs despite political, especially economic, pressures of the West. Iran can even export technological know-how to other countries. Today Iran is a combat zone against the United States dominance and naturally United States and Zionist regime politicians are furious about it. As stated by the leader of the Islamic revolution today, the Iranian nation is following the path of the late Imam Khomeyni, may God bless his soul, and is withstanding United States pressures firmly and this is the key to the victory of the Muslim Iranian nation against the world arrogance.

Khamene'i Addresses IRGC Commanders, Officials

LD2612155695 Tehran IRNA in English 1532 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — The leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i said here on Tuesday that today the world is under influence of the teachings of the prophets sent to men by the almighty.

The commander in chief of the armed forces was speaking to thousands of commanders, officials and personnel of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps [IRGC] on the occasion of the auspicious birthday anniversary of Imam Houssein (as), the third imam of the household of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him).

The supreme leader said the U.S. propaganda and the statements made by American officials against the Islamic Republic of Iran lend proof to the victory of the Iranian nation and the defeat and disappointment of the U.S.

Today a power is leading other big powers of the world that is not committed to human values and its statesmen are only after their interventionist objectives and to whom none of human values is meaningful, the revered leader said.

The U.S. Administration accept democracy only to the extent that it guarantees their interests, or else democracy is something meaningless to them, the supreme leader said.

The leader pointed to the developments in the contemporary world and the position of nations against the interventionist policies of the U.S., saying the number of resistance cores against the immoral attitude of the U.S. is on the rise worldwide.

Europe and large states in Asia do not allow the U.S. to maintain its domination over the world, the leader of the Islamic revolution said.

Ayatollah Khamene'i said the Islamic revolution and Iranian Muslim nation constitute the main center of resistance against the U.S. and that is why the American statesmen bear a grudge against the Iranian people.

The birthday anniversary of the Imam Houssein, the lord of the martyrs is celebrated in Iran as the IRGC day.

Before the leader's speech, representative of the supreme leader at the IRGC, Hojatoleslam Movahedi

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Kermani and the IRGC commander, Major General Mohsen Rezaei felicitated Ayatollah Khamene'i on the birthday anniversary of the third imam (as).

President Sends Message to Pope

LD2612065295 Tehran IRNA in English
0644 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, here Monday [25 December], in a message to Pope John Paul II, congratulated him on the Birth Anniversary of Jesus Christ (PBUH) and the start of the new Christian year.

The president expressed hope that by following teachings of divine religions all nations throughout the world will work to eliminate crime, corruption, injustice, oppression and domination from the face of the earth.

The president also hoped that practical and concrete measures will be taken to settle crisis and restore peace and stability in Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other trouble spots of the world.

President Rafsanjani sent separate messages to heads of Christian countries congratulating them and their nations on the joyful occasion.

In his messages the president wished a prosperous new year for all followers of the divine religions and hoped that the year 1996 will bring peace and tranquility.

President Addresses Senior Commanders

LD2512211495 Tehran IRNA in English
2025 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — President Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here on Monday that the Islamic Republic of Iran has the potential to develop into a motherland for the great Islamic civilization.

The president made the remarks to a gathering of senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) after a three hour inspection visit of the first ever technical-engineering achievements exhibition of the IRGC.

During his visit to the exhibition a cooperation agreement was signed between Agriculture Minister Issa Klantari and IRGC Commander Major General Mohsen Rezaie for developing 14 agro-industry projects near the borders of Iran with the investment and cooperation of tribes of those areas.

The agro-industry projects would develop over an area of 50 to 100 km. in the first phase the projects would cover an area of 200,000 hectares while in the second and third phase they will spread over an area of about 500,000 hectares of lands.

President Rafsanjani said the project would have security, economic and political implications which, among other things, would help improve employment and prevent drug abuse in the country.

He said an important part of the IRGC exhibition was the display of the heavily damaged machinery such as loaders, army tanks, and personnel carriers which had been repaired by the IRGC.

He noted that thousands of pieces of those repaired machinery is to be put to good use in the near future.

The exhibit is being held on the occasion of 'IRGC day' which marks the birth anniversary of the lord of martyrs Imam Hussein in Tehran this year.

Later, in a report to President Rafsanjani, IRGC commander said that almost every point along Iran's borders with its neighbours has been made virtually impossible to penerate by drug traffickers. He added that the anti-revolutionaries were also unable to conduct any activity along any part of the borders.

Mohsen Rezaie said the IRGC had already attained technical self- sufficiency for development and rehabilitation projects. He said the IRGC was now conducting feasibility studies on a total of 200 projects of which 30 per cent had been completed.

The exhibition demonstrates the defense capacity for technical self-sufficiency of the IRGC, as well as its capacity for repair and maintenance of machinery, and for engaging in economic projects for national development.

Khamene'i Attends Service for President's Mother

LD2412131695 Tehran IRNA in English
1231 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — The supreme leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i attended a memorial services held in commemoration of deceased mother of President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Sunday morning.

Present at the ceremony were President Rafsanjani and his family, the country's high-ranking officials, Tehran-based diplomats from Islamic countries and a large group of people.

The supreme leader condoled the president and prayed to the almighty that the soul of the deceased rest in peace.

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Speaking at the ceremony, Majles speaker Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri expressed condolences to the president and his bereaved family.

The speaker also praised the role played by the president's parents, particularly his mother in bringing up such personalities who played a great part in the culmination of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979.

Nateq-Nuri pointed out that based on the past experiences the U.S. threats and conspiracies will turn out to be futile and Washington's efforts to demolish Iran's Islamic system will get nowhere.

Incentives Urged To Encourage Emigres To Help Country

NC2312080795 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 16 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Participation of Iranians Abroad in National Development Is a Duty"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A citizen of a country is virtually a debtor to his nation.

The world has become so small today that one can say human beings are members of a single family. Emigrations and immigrations have become an essential part of today's life. Under certain circumstances, citizens of a country opt to reside and live in another country, but they can never forget their motherland.

Irrespective of the country in which they choose to live, it is the duty of citizens of a country to repay their debt to their country of origin through rendering serves to their motherland.

Iranians are no exception. There are a substantial number of Iranians living in different parts of the world. Most of them are businessmen or specialists. Some Iranians residing abroad have completed their studies in Iran, while some have received their higher education abroad. In either case, they are indebted to their motherland.

On the one hand, Iranians abroad should spare no effort in repaying their debt to their country; on the other hand, the Iranian government should facilitate the participation of Iranians abroad in the process of national development.

The government can encourage the participation of Iranians abroad in national development through providing incentives. It entails ratification of certain laws, assignment of certain projects to interested investors, etc.

The government has thus far taken several crucial steps in this direction, but they are enough [as published]. Iranians residing abroad have not responded as much as the nation expected.

In the aftermath of the collapse of monarchy in Iran, some of our fellow countrymen left Iran under the impact of propaganda disseminated by global arrogance. Fortunately, most of those who left Iran during the past few years have realized that they have been misled. They are now willing to return or invest in Iran. Iran welcomes all its nationals from all parts of the world to its bosom.

Iranians abroad ought not forget that their fellow countrymen suffered much during the eight years of imposed war. During those days most Iranians abroad lived a peaceful life away from the tumult of war. The time is now ripe to compensate for the past.

Khamene'i Issues Pardons for Convicts

LD1912155495 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 19 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the eve of the anniversary [20 December] of the start of the blessed prophethood of his holiness Muhammad, peace be upon him and his scion, and the birthday of his holiness Imam Husayn, may peace be upon him, his eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, today agreed with a proposal by the head of the judicial power [Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi] to pardon or commute the sentences of some 1,160 inmates convicted by ordinary, Islamic revolution and military courts. [passage omitted]

FAO Official on Agricultural Potential

LD2712184095 Tehran IRNA in English 1830 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gorgan, Mazandaran Prov., Dec. 27, IRNA — Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Ambassador to Iran Jamal Ahmad said here Wednesday that Iran would no longer need to import agricultural products if its agricultural sector were mechanized and its consumption pattern altered.

Ahamd said that 30 percent of agricultural crops, based on annual statistics, was wasted both during the time of the harvest and in the process of consumption.

He added that Iran enjoyed a special status in terms of food security as compared to other developing countries.

Reports released by FAO indicate that about 800 million people were suffering from hunger throughout the world.

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The FAO official enumerated that farming was favorable due to great reserves of underground water, rich soil and good geographical conditions.

He proposed that that each province in Iran employ new and innovative farming techniques so that they become self-suffient in agricultural produce in the second five-year development plan.

The FAO representative added that based on the policy pursued by the government on foreign exchange earning produce, Iran can achieve that goal successfully.

Ahmad said there were two joint olive cultivation projects underway on hilly farming areas in Gorgan undertaken by Iran and FAO.

He said that data would be collected within the framework of the project on water condition, farmers' participation, their share based on the output and other social issues.

SALAM Reflects on Economic, Social Problems

Foreign Broadcast Information Service Media Note

[1995 Series, Number 4]

[FBIS Media Note] The Tehran daily SALAM carries a regular column, "Hello, SALAM" based on telephoned-in complaints and remarks of ordinary Iranian citizens. The following series of dialogues between callers and the paper are excerpted from October editions. These particular complaints deal with the elections, U.S. sanctions, Dr. Sorush's talk at Tehran University, Iraqi elections, lack of justice.

On Iran's Elections:

[Caller] How can we have impartial and untainted elections when governor generals, governors, and lieutenant governors openly campaign for special candidates? Can we hope for a clean and impartial election? [18 October 95]

[Caller] The eligibility of a candidate should be determined by the Judiciary Branch and based on an absence of any criminal record. The Council of Guardians should get involved only insofar as to make certain the elections are running properly and nothing more. Because, if the left or right wing holds the majority in the Council of Guardians, that wing can use it to its own advantage. [18 October 95]

[Caller] Usually when elections are discussed in the "Hello, SALAM" column, you speak of a particular group, even though presently in Iran there is no special group. Even if there were any, they are more concerned with their own particular interests. If you are really interested in the nation, pay attention also to independent candidates who are, by and large, more qualified.

[SALAM] No registration has taken place; no list of candidates from any group has been announced; nor is it clear who the independent candidates are. [19 October 95]

[Caller] Let those who plan to participate in the elections remember to vote for representatives who occasionally defend the dreary life of salaried individuals and warn the government to improve their economic life. [22 October 95]

On U.S. Sanctions:

[Caller] If someone insists, he cannot be believed; if he swears, people will doubt! These days we hear from every corner that our situation has improved because of the U.S. sanctions. Don't you think people will begin doubting when something is repeated so often? Everyone knows that even a sanction by Ethiopia would have an impact, not to mention one from the United States.

[SALAM] We have previously talked about this and we'll repeat again that those saying this do not mean that severence of all U.S.-Iranian ties is to our advantage. If that were the case, they would not try to establish commercial ties. Rather, they mean that when the Americans treat us with such animosity and subject us to sanctions, it forces our nation to rely more on its own ability, ingenuity, and resources. Also, the regime will mobilize its entire force to combat this hostile act. This effort is beneficial. Countries who believe the U.S. wants to be the only superpower in the world will try to fill its place. Therefore, it is said that U.S. sanctions are to our benefit. [19 October 95]

On SALAM And Its Readers:

[Caller] I am sure that in certain cases you do not express your real views and opinions in your newspaper. Doubtless you have your reasons, but do you know that those who are informed will not value your newspaper anymore? You know that your readers are the cream of the crop. Then, strive to nurture them.

[SALAM] Tell us when you believe we have written things contrary to our belief. Hopefully, we will come to an understanding. [18 October 95]

[Caller] Daily the public is drawn closer to SALAM newspaper because SALAM decides either to print things that other newspapers do not dare to print or is not to their advantage. In the country's current situation, the public needs to be exposed to these topics. [22 October 95]

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[Caller] Why do you not write anything about Mr. Karrubi? He, too, is condemned to silence like Ayatollah Ardabili. Are the Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez [the Combatant Clergy] limited to Mr. Mohtashemi? Why do they [Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez] not act? Is this lack of activity due to fear?

[SALAM] The silence of someone like Mr. Karrubi is certainly not due to fear. He probably puts the good of the country above his own.

[Caller] The law will catch up with you, too, for insulting our officials. One of these days the Ansar Party will accuse you of affronting it and will subject you to blows and curses. You should close your shop and give everyone some peace and quiet.

[SALAM] First, we want to tell this reader that closing SALAAM will not bring peace and quiet. It will pacify only some. Second, the duty of the media is to constantly show sensitivity to matters that concern people and prevent them from leaving things to chance. As for the brothers known as Ansar Party, apparently they do not need laws. Their action demonstrates that if the goal and the instinct is to defend religious values, they are entitled to any act and are above the law. [23 October 95]

On Dr. Sorush's Talk at Tehran University:

[Caller] Since your reporter is only human, I suggest, that in cases such as the incident at Tehran University, you assign two reporters with antithetical views so that the truth might become known at least to the management of the newspaper. What your reporter recounted about the incident at the University was not impartial, since the reported comments of one hezbollahi member was the complete opposite of what he actually said. It appears that your reporter is opposed to the Ansar-e Hezbollah Group.

[SALAM] It is obvious that we, as well as our reporter, are opposed to what these Ansarollah Brothers have done, and we strongly condemn these acts and warn the regime against a policy of silence and apathy. We find it dangerous for the system and the reputation of Islam to allow a group to act as it pleases when something is not to its liking. First, we find our reporter's account of the incident at the University completely objective. Second, aside from the reporter's account, out of respect for our readers, we published the Islamic Organization's statement as well as the letter of one of the members of the group known as Ansar-e Hezbollah to allow them to look at the incident from different points of view. We must add, however, that the incident was more regretable than our reporter's story.

We advise the students and especially the Islamic organizations at the universities to stop sedition, to refrain from anything that might lead to agitation, and to consider differences as internal family matters because the spread of these differences are to the disadvantage of everyone in society. If the regime finds these sessions and talks injurious, it should officially and through legal means prohibit them. [19 October 95]

[Caller] We have heard it said repeatedly by officials that Iran is the freest nation in the world. How do they reconcile that view with preventing Dr. Sorush's conference to take place at the Technical College of Tehran University? Do they favor or oppose such incidents?. If opposed, please have them announce it through free forums.

[SALAM] According to the news published last week by the Cultural Revolution Council's meeting, it seems that people are responsible for their own protection. It is surprising that the president and the judiciary head dodged condemning a criminal act of aggression on city-dwellers' security. They satisfied themselves with a mere recommendation. It is not clear what is going on behind closed doors that prevents these gentlemen from taking a clear position. [21 October 95]

[Caller] Before the revolution, Tehran University was the center of resistance and political activities for students. It was not associated with any particular group. I would like to ask the students not to remain silent in response to the attackers of Dr. Sorush's talk. They should stand firm and resist.

[SALAM] We dismiss all suggestions that might add to the atmosphere of confusion at the university. The point is not to reject this reader's suggestion. Rather, since universities are frequented by young people, emotions run high. Therefore, anything that might cause further excitement should be avoided, however good their intentions. Our suggestion is that the students, with the cooperation and guidance of the professors, proceed through sensible means to persuade the country's officals that these acts are not to the advantage of universities and society. [21 October 95]

[Caller] How is it that those who claim to protect the right of Muslims across the world cannot tolerate a talk from a Muslim thinker? [21 October 95]

[Caller] Considering that on Wednesday, an ordinary and non-political talk was attacked, and considering further that the object of the attackers was Dr Sorush and the members of the Islamic Organization of Tehran University, how can one talk about political activities by students and others? Who benefits from this disorderly and intimidating atmosphere? [22 October 95]

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[Caller] In my opinion, all the media, whether radio, television, or press, including you yourself, have magnified the news of the gathering of the African Americans in protest against their political system by propagating it. Because at the same time that the news of this huge million-man gathering in front of the U.S. Congress was recounted, an attack was made on an erudite Muslim. Not only did the U.S. police not attack the demonstrators, but rather it insured their safety. Do you have anything to say to this? [22 October 95]

[Caller] As a war veteran and a member of the Ansar Party, some of whom are basijis and some of whom fought at the front, I beg them to be more logical. It should be mentioned that some members of this group spent not even a single day at the front, and now they act as claimants. [22 October 95]

[Caller] The result of the clash of the Ansar Party and Dr. Sorush leads impartial individuals to sympathize with Dr. Sorush, which is precisely the opposite of what the agitators want. [22 October 95]

[Caller] If the attackers on the Technical College of the University of Tehran were only opposed to Dr. Sorush's talk, why did they attack the Islamic Society's office and beat and curse the individuals? [22 October 95]

[Caller] Regarding the recent event at the Technical College, I suggest that instead of the two sides fighting with each other and each side claiming to carry the banner of Islam, they ought to leave it to the religious ulema [religious authorities]. If the ulema fear debating Dr. Sorush because they might think people would think that they will validate him, it would be good to remind them that Dr. Beheshti debated Kianuri and Behazin [Translater's note: Nureddin Kianuri was the secretary of the Tudeh Party for many years; Behazin was an airforce pilot with socialist tendencies]. Of course, that is if we think Dr. Sorush is as opposed to the system as those two were. [23 October 95]

[Caller] It would be good for the government to react decisively and through legal channels in response to the attackers of the Technical College so as not to be accused of being a part of it. Does not the government have the legal and manpower means? Why then does it allow some to threaten the rule of law and political and social stability? [24 October 95]

[Caller] The speaker of the Majles congratulated the African Americans for their million-man march and their defense of human dignity. I don't know what should be said to the arrogant American government which lets such demonstrations take place. Should it be congratulated or offered condolences? It even released the news to the entire world. We, on the other hand, prevented a university professor from giving a talk and subjected him and his followers to attacks and curses. Furthermore, we either did not provide the news or disseminated it inaccurately. [24 October 95]

[Caller] Is not the recent Majles law on punishment incompatible with total participation by everyone in political and election activities? Did they not prepare the grounds for the African American demonstrations in the U.S.? How is it that in our society the right to protest and criticize is limited more and more every day?

[SALAM] These people who are the subject of our hate have learned how to administer their society so that even if one million African Americans demonstrate and deliver the harshest speeches in front of the seat of power, it will not cause instability in the pillars of the government and nobody will be subjected to attacks and cursed for weakening the system. However, here we run the country so that a conference addressing an audience of two thousand in a confined area worries us. We turn it into the problem of the day. And, in spite of all claims of strength, we cannot hide our deep fear and we attack them, claiming that it will weaken our youth's faith and beliefs. We are unaware of the big question mark we create in the minds of young people, which will not easily be erased. [24 October 95]

[Caller] Please say a few words about Mr. Sorush's views. Is he prevented from talking because he is right or is wrong?

[SALAM] Some consider Dr. Sorush's thoughts and ideas contrary to religion. Others believe that his thoughts would help the growth and advancement of religious culture. What is important is that the two groups respect each other's views and those interested read and hear discussions. The result of this exchange of ideas will lead to social growth. [24 October 95]

[Caller] Tell the brother who said: "If we were not present, not only the speech and the pen of Mr. Sorush and 'Abdi [Translator's note: 'Abbas 'Abdi, SALAM's editor-in-chief was arrested and held prisoner for his writings for many months in August 1993 without ever being charged] would have been in danger, but so would have been their lives," that we believe in and respect the hezbollahi brothers. But Mr. Sorush must be able to speak and Mr. 'Abdi must be able to write. We are free to choose the good and cast away the bad. I promise this hezbollahi brother that Islam and the system are not in danger. [24 October 95]

On Iraqi Elections:

[Caller] Why did the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not agree to send Iranian reporters to observe the Iraqi

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elections? We should have been able to see upclose whether Saddam has the support of his people and is, in fact, popular. It seems that we missed a good opportunity.

[SALAM] The Iraqi Embassy, claiming that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not want any reporters sent to Iraq, refrained from giving any visas until the last days. By the time it announced that it was ready to give visas, there was no time to send any reporters. Fortunately, some newspapers were able to send reporters to Iraq. We must wait to see the result of the polls. It should be mentioned that we and possibly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not know how certain newspapers were able to send their reporters there. [19 October 95]

On Lack of Justice in Enforcing the Law:

[Caller] How is it possible for a 12-year old child to go to prison for stealing four chickens while the former managing director of the tobacco company can embezzle millions of dollars and remain free; and free to associate with Majles representatives? I can testify in which representatives' houses I have seen him. [18 October 95]

On Simple Life Led by Some Representatives:

[Caller] I saw Mr. Morteza Nabavi riding a common motorcycle at the intersection of Taleqani and Vali'asr today. I was delighted at his humility and modesty. I believe these individuals deserve to be encouraged.

[SALAM] Aside from our differences in political views, the particularities of Engineer Morteza Nabavi, director of RESALAT newspaper and the representative of Tehran, are admirable in our opinion, too. The above—mentioned instance is testimony to his simple way of living. [23 October 95]

Pakistan

Spokesman Rejects Indian Charge on Arms Airdropping

BK2812133995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan today rejected Indian allegations made by its interior minister that the Pakistani security's involved in the mysterious airdropping of arms for terrorists in West Bengal. A Foreign Office spokesman, while briefing newsmen in Islamabad today, said the charges are unfounded and leveled with malicious intent. He said Pakistan has taken a very serious view of these unwarranted allegations made without any investigation into the matter:

[Begin spokesman recording] The Government of Pakistan fully respects the sovereignty of every independent state and there is no question of Pakistan's involvement in such activities as Pakistan has no aggressive designs against India. [end recording]

Officials Deny Plane Crew Stayed in Karachi 2 Months

BK2812143995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1431 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Dec 28 (AFP) — Pakistani immigration officials Thursday [28 December] said the AN-26 crew detained in India after a mystery arms air-drop over West Bengal did not stay in Karachi for two months as alleged by Bombay police.

"The plane arrived in Karachi on December 13 from Isfahan (Iran) and left for Varanasi on December 17," a senior immigration official told AFP. "The crew were given landing permits for 120 hours per IATA (International Air Travel Association) rules."

"The (local) handling agent Shaheen Air, in its report has said that the flight did not load or offload any cargo in Karachi," the official added.

"The rules indicate that crew members of cargo and passenger planes are on a general declaration and those who arrive without visas are routinely given landing permits which are surrendered on departure," the official said.

Three parachute-loads of arms were dropped near Puruliya in India's eastern state of West Bengal on December 17 from a Hong Kong-registered AN-26 transport plane.

Five Latvians and a Briton aboard the plane were later taken in by Indian authorities when the plane was forced to land at Bombay on December 22 while returning to Karachi. They have reportedly confessed to dropping the weapons.

A seventh man, New Zealander Kim Davy, evaded arrest in Bombay.

Bombay police said the men were in Karachi for two months prior to the air drop and that their passports did not have entry and exit stamps.

The Pakistani immigration official said this was incorrect, adding that the crew's landing permit had both the entry and departure stamps.

Indian Plane Makes Emergency Landing Following Bomb Threat

BK2812162295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An Air India plane flying from New Delhi to Dubayy with 200 passengers made an

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emergency landing at Karachi Airport this afternoon after an anonymous call was received that a bomb was planted on it. All the passengers and crew members were evacuated and the plane was thoroughly searched before being cleared. According to an airline spokesperson, the passengers are being sent on to Dubayy by other flights while the plane has returned to Bombay.

Indian Release of Kashmir Leader's Relatives Sought

BK2812160695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A memorandum has been submitted to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad which forcefully demands the Indian Government to release forthwith the three elderly members of the family of Syed Nazir Gilani, the secretary general of the London-based Jammu and Kashmir Council. The memorandum was submitted by a representative delegation of various political parties, nongovernmental organizations, and journalists. The memorandum says the kidnapping of elderly family members of a person who works for the protection and promotion of human rights of every person is the worst example of state-level terrorism and blackmailing.

Later, a 10-member delegation led by Mohammad Farooq Rahmani, chairman of the Jammu Kashmir People's League, called on Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan and apprised him of the current situation in the occupied valley.

Leghari: 'No Power on Earth' Can Strain Iran Ties

LD2812212595 Tehran IRNA in English 2031 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec. 28, IRNA — In a meeting here today with the Iranian Minister of Culture and Higher Education Mohammad Reza Hashemi-Golpayegani, Pakistani President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said that no power on earth could strain the brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan.

Referring to the Afghan issue, Leghari was confident that through negotiations Iran and Pakistan would help bring an end to the factional conflicts in that country. He added that Islamabad was interested in seeing all Afghan groups play an active role in the political construction of their country.

Hashemi-Golpayegani, conveying Leghari a message from his Iranian counterpart Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, underscored the two countries' efforts to restore peace and stability in war-stricken Afghanistan. He also referred to scientific and research achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran and called for setting up of a joint Iran-Pakistan scientific and industrial committee.

Leghari in reply, underlined the need for expansion of scientific and technical cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad and announced his satisfaction over the two countries' economic relations. He hoped that the next summit of the heads of state of Muslim countries would afford an opportunity for boosting cooperation in the Islamic world.

Says 'Keen' To Work With Iran for Afghan Peace

BK2912054195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president, Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, has said Pakistan is very keen to have closer cooperation with Iran for restoration of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan. The president made this observation while talking to the Iranian minister for research, Dr. (Fathollah Mostahzadeh), who called on him in Islamabad yesterday. The president said after restoration of peace in Afghanistan and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem, the whole region will be a big market beneficial to all countries in the region, including Iran, Pakistan, Central Asian Republics, and even India.

Reciprocating the sentiments expressed by the president, the Iranian minister said his country also wanted to have close and cordial relations with Pakistan and proposed that the two countries should set up a special joint committee for research in science and technology.

The visiting Syrian minister for higher education, Dr. Salihah Sunqur, also called on the president. Talking to the Syrian minister, the president reiterated Pakistan's support for permanent peace in the Middle East and in South Asia.

Referring to the Kashmir problem, the president said Pakistan wanted a peaceful solution of the dispute on the basis of UN resolutions and in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiri people.

Commandos Patrol Busy Areas After Bombing Incidents

BK2812115095 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Dec 95 pp 1, 11

[Pakistan Press International report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rawalpindi — Rawalpindi police have deployed police commandos at bus stops and other busiest public places of the city including Faizabad Chowk, Fowara Chowk, Sadar Bazar and Pir Wadhai to tackle any untoward incident.

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This step was taken in view of increasing incidents of bomb blasts in different cities of the country.

The local police have been directed to take stern action against the illegal immigrant and watch the activities of suspicious persons.

Bomb disposal squads, civil defence department and the medical superintendents (MS) of all major hospitals of the cities have been informed to prepare themselves to meet any unpleasant incident.

High ranking police officials met with different unions of traders in which police demanded their full cooperation. Police asked them to avoid parking their cars in the rush places. In this connection the facility of parking is being provided at Liaquat Bagh.

Police also appealed to the general public to cooperate with the police and local administration and if they observe any suspicious car and person, inform the police on emergency numbers 562222 and 563333.

APP adds: Meanwhile, security measures reviewed against possible subversive activities and particularly bomb blasts were reviewed at a high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Karachi Ziaul Islam here Wednesday.

The meeting called on the directive of Chief Minister Sindh, was attended by DIG [Deputy Inspector General] Karachi, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs [Senior Superintendent of Police] of the five districts of Karachi besides representatives of SUPARCO [Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission], KESC [Karachi Electrical Supply Corporation], Local Government, Port Qasim, Pakistan Security Printing Corporation, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, PTV [Pakistan Television], PTC [Pakistan Telecommunications Corporation], Home Department, KANUPP [Karachi Nuclear Power Project], KPT, SESSI, Sindh Coal Development Authority, Services and General Administration Department, Karachi Airport, Pakistan Steel, Sindh Small Industries, Mines Development, KWSB, SITE [Satellite Instructional Television Experiment] Association, Pakistan Refinery, National Refinery, Sui Gas and Education Department.

Bhutto Receives Message From Afghanistan's Dostam

BK2812155595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, has sent a condolence message to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in connection with the bomb blast in Peshawar. He expressed heartfelt condolences on his own behalf and on behalf of his party activists and the people of the northern areas of Afghanistan to the people of Pakistan, especially the bereaved families of the bomb blast victims. Strongly condemning the terrorist and inhuman acts by certain elements in Kabul, Rashid Dostam said these acts will not affect the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1415 GMT on 28 December adds: "Afghanistan's Uzbek leader General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam has blamed the Kabul government for last week's car bombing in Pakistan, which killed dozens of people, the Foreign Office here said Thursday. The allegation came in a condolence message sent by Dostam to Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. 'The sabotage activity was carried out by the illegitimate and widely defamed Kabul regime which was not sincere to its own country,' Dostam said in his message, which was released here by the Foreign Office."]

Haji Abdol Qadeer, governor of Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province, and Nangarhar Chief Justice Mawlavi Shumar Khan visited the Pakistani Consulate in Jalalabad and expressed grief over the bomb blast in Peshawar. Both leaders condemned this act of terrorism that killed and wounded innocent people. Commander Alhaj Malangiar, Haji Abdol Hadi, Haji Abdol Matin Bacha, and other leading commanders also expressed deep anguish over this incident. Haji Hazrat 'Ali, a senior member of the Afghan Jehadi Shura, also visited the Pakistani Consulate and expressed grief and anguish over this tragic incident.

OIC Chief Urges Kashmir Solution Under UN Resolutions

BK2912055295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] secretary general, Mr. Hamid Algabid, says the OIC resolution on Kashmir at Conakry has called for solution of the issue between Pakistan and India under UN resolutions. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad last evening before his departure for Jeddah, he said Pakistan and India should solve the Kashmir issue through discussions on the basis of UN resolutions, which clearly emphasize the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Kashmiri people. He opined that even the Simla Agreement demands that the Kashmiris be given the right of self-determnation.

Replying to a question, he said there was an agreement that there should no embargo on the transfer of technology and on research activities for peaceful purposes. He condemned the use of science and technology for destruction.

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Regarding the just concluded COMSTEC [OIC's Committee on Scientific and Technical Cooperation] meeting in Islamabad, he said it was significant as it provided an opportunity for exchange of views among member states and provided an opportunity to consider the question of financing of bodies dealing with science and technology.

Bhutto Repeats Offer for Talks With Opposition

BK2812150095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has categorically denied the Indian allegations of Pakistan's involvement in the recent weapons airdrop incident in India. Addressing a mammoth public meeting at Gojra in Faisalabad Division today, the prime minister said India was raising hue and cry on the issue of weapons airdrop to hide her own real intention of conducting another nuclear test. [passage omitted]

She declared that Pakistan will continue to play its due role in the UN peacekeeping efforts and fighting out the drug menace and terrorism at all costs.

Referring to the country's political situation, the prime minister once again invited the opposition to come to the negotiating table to sort out differences on all the issues of national importance, particularly the issues enshrined in the manifestos of both the parties. She announced that the present assemblies will complete their five-year tenure, and if the opposition decides to resign their assembly seats en block, they will be filled through by-elections.

The prime minister said the present government has initiated a comprehensive program to provide all the basic amenities of life to the so far ignored and remote rural areas of the country to eliminate disparity among the developed and nondeveloped areas. The prime minister announced to construct an under bypass on railway crossing Gojra and accorded formal approval for laying an astroturf at the local hockey stadium to provide standard sports facilities to the hockey players. The prime minister also formally inaugurated work on the multipurpose Gojra bypass road and a modern digital telephone exchange comprising 2,250 lines to be completed at a cost of 220 million rupees.

The meeting was also addressed by the chief minister of Punjab, Sardar Mohammad Arif Nakai; the federal minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal; and the senior Punjab minister, Malik Mushtaq Ahamd Awan. Later, the prime minister received various representative delegations and exchanged views with them on various developmental and political issues.

Leghari Urges Amicable Solution of Issues With Opposition

BK2912050895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president, Farooq Ahmad Leghari, has urged the opposition and the government to adopt a joint line of action for the stability of the country, welfare of the people, and restoration of law and order. He said this while talking to a delegation at Kalabagh yesterday. He said the present national interests demand the government and the opposition to sit together for the solution of national issues amicably.

Opposition Leader Urges Support for Strike Call

BK2812121995 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Dec 95 pp 1,11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Announcing his support to the Milli Yakjehti Council-sponsored country-wide strike on December 30, PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz Group] Chief and Opposition Leader Mian Nawaz Sharif has urged all chambers, trade unions and people at large to observe the day as such.

The Opposition Leader said the Benazir Bhutto Government has caused irreparable loss to the defence, economic and political interests of the country and plunged the people into lawlessness, price-hike, unemployment and corruption. Her Government also damaged the Kashmir cause and ridiculed the Islamic and eastern values, he added.

Mian Nawaz Sharif said in these circumstances, the Muslim League takes upon itself the task to get rid of the present Government considering it a national and moral responsibility. He further said his party along with the whole opposition has decided to support those struggling to overthrow this Government. It may be mentioned that a delegation of Milli Yakjehti Council (MYC) met the Muslim League leader Raja Zafarul Haq and he appealed to his party to join their country-wide strike and Mian Nawaz Sharif after discussing this suggestion in his high-level party meeting announced to support the strike.

Following the wheel jam strike call given by Milli Yakjehti Council (MYC), the representative of various traders' organisations met here on Wednesday to chalk out a strategy to make the strike a success.

The information collected by THE NATION revealed that a delegation of Business Forum (BF) met here with President of Traders' Association, Punjab, Maqsood Butt to finalise a programme.

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In the meeting, various committees were constituted to supervise all the arrangements in this regard. The meeting also decided to constitute 'Task Forces' which would carry out the required steps during the strike. Meanwhile, according to the Press release of BF, Akbari Mindi, Shah Alam Market, Rang Mahal Market, Liberty Market, and Anarkali would be closed on December 30.

Moreover, the office-bearers of the Mall Road Traders Association and the representatives of adjoining markets decided to close down their business on the day of strike.

Spokesman on Visit by U.S. Congressmen, NGO's

BK2812150695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has strongly rejected Indian allegations of its involvement in the mysterious airdrop of sophisticated arms in West Bengal. A Foreign Office spokesman, briefing newsmen in Islamabad today, said Pakistan fully respects the sovereignty of every independent state. He said there is no question of Pakistan's involvement in such activities as it has no aggressive designs against India. He said Pakistan takes serious note of this unwarranted and unfounded allegation, which has been made with malicious intent and motives.

Asked about the forthcoming visit of the two U.S. congressmen to Pakistan, the spokesman said Pakistan would welcome any mediatory role by American Government on Kashmir, but pointed out that India has always rejected the third party mediation.

To yet another question regarding working of foreign NGO's [nongovernmental organizations] in Pakistan, the spokesman stated that Western countries share our concern about terrorism and negative activities of some of these organizations.

Editorial Views Government Crackdown on Foreign NGO's

BK2812135095 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 28 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Tightening Screws on Foreign NGO's"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has decided to tighten screws on foreign NGOs [nongovernmental organizations]. The decision ostensibly comes in the wake of the recent Peshawar bombing. Newspaper reports say the government will not allow new foreign NGOs to operate in the country unless their credentials, and those of their staff, are certified by the ambassador concerned. Also, a special committee is being set up to establish whether these NGOs are working in keeping with their charter. We have also learnt that close to 90 per cent Pakistani NGOs might come under the axe for one reason or another. Pakistan has been expressing its disquiet over the working of some foreign NGOs. The French NGO, Madera, was recently asked to wrap up its work in Pakistan following allegations that it was involved in spying activities. The government gave the impression that some of the French nationals working for Madera passed sensitive information to the Rabbani government in Kabul, a charge that Paris rejected with some displeasure. The NGO, which says its major focus is on alleviating the pains of the Afghans caught in their country's civil war, had to move its offices to Kabul. We have also heard that the government has asked all Afghan-related non-governmental organizations to shift their offices to Afghanistan. This has been necessitated by security reasons, so it seems.

Pakistan has long tolerated foreign NGOs operating from its soil for the benefits of Afghan refugees. At the peak of the Afghan war, this policy appeared to be a rational one, even though impartial commentators said at the time that some of the foreign NGOs had a contradictory agenda. The then government blinked at these reservations, because it had inextricably linked itself to the West's strategy for ensnaring the former Soviet Union. Though the Afghan war is still continuing, its present scale cannot bear comparison in terms of dislocation and misery that the Afghan people suffered during the Soviet occupation. Paradoxically, the number of NGOs hasn't declined in recent years. The government has the right to subject their working to a thorough going scrutiny. But it is important that it doesn't view every foreign NGO with suspicion. Unfortunately, the government has the tendency to go after these NGOs in the aftermath of a crisis situation. If the situation warrants a determined squeeze against these NGOs, it must be seen to be the result of a well-considered policy and not a typical knee-jerk reaction.

Sri Lanka

Editorial Claims LTTE Behind Arms Drop in India

BK2812035995 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 28 Dec 95

[Editorial: "The Arms Sky-Drop" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BBC did not actually rush to give us the news that a British subject is involved in the air drop of arms close to the India-Bangladesh border. It was only a day or two later after an Antonov, perhaps a gun-running rival, was also grounded in Bombay on suspicion of similar activities that the eyes and ears of the world began to focus on this sinister event now unfolding in the Indian sub-continent.

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A little over three weeks ago a news item appeared in THE TIMES OF INDIA headlined "LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has major role in arms supply to militants: Govt." In the context of what appears to be the latest method of arms distribution that is taking advantage of India's 'open skies' policy, the LTTE appears to be playing a co-ordinating role, according to senior officials in India's home ministry to whom this story was sourced.

According to them an Assamese group of insurgents arrested and interrogated some time back, had confessed that they have succeeded in establishing bases in Bangladesh and that the LTTE is now linked to these bases.

Similarly, information obtained from Nagaland insurgents has shown that the LTTE is also linked with the militants in Nagaland. On this route, linking Assam, Nagaland and Myanmar the LTTE has succeeded in establishing transit facilities and safe houses, particularly in Myanmar [Burma]. The LTTE's link up in the north east of India, according to Indian officials, "is now a source of fresh worries for us."

The activists arrested by the Indian Government have also revealed that the arms bought from the bazaars of Thailand are being dumped in the remote areas along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. From this they dribble out to both India and Sri Lanka.

The LTTE has also been seen moving around in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. Up to now the supplies of arms have been shipped in Thai fishing boats which drop them in the no-man's land area between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Bihar where the AK 47s have been air dropped is the distribution centre for the southern parts of India while the arms supplies to Punjab and Kashmir are routed through Darjeeling and Nepal.

Whoever is the master-mind in this entire operation of gun- running, has curiously enough, entrusted the distribution of the ammunition only to another group which routes it through Nepal. From there supplies are sent to Agra in the north and Mysore in the south.

Our beginnings, T.S. Eliot has observed, never know our ends. This should be true about the Tigers who were trained by Indian under-cover agents to handle arms and ammunition in order to secure Eelam. The trainers probably never anticipated that Eelam will turn into a distant dream and that the training in the use of arms and ammunition given will re-circulate back to India is now what seems a bizarre fashion.

LTTE Reportedly Harassing Civilians in East

BK2812121695 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The residents in the Eastern Province have begun to openly oppose the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] actions. Eastern information sources revealed that the LTTE has stepped up their violent activities, using the civilians as a cover for these acts. The LTTE is also harassing the civilians and were compelling them to join the organization. The youths have also resisted the attempts by the LTTE to conscript them. The desperate Tiger cadres have begun to harass them in various ways. The leader of a main Tamil political party in the Eastern Province says that the people of the east are conscious of the fact that the civilians in Jaffna had to face various hardships because of the LTTE power in the north. The eastern people were convinced that they should not permit the LTTE to gain more power in the east as it could lead to their suppression.

At least 15 terrorists are reported to have died in an abortive LTTE attack on a security forces division at Pudur on the border of the Vadamarachchi and Walikamam Divisions of the Jaffna peninsula. According to LANKAPUVATH, bodies of seven terrorists have been recovered along with their weapons. The incident had occurred on Tuesday. Security sources report that a large group of LTTE cadres had launched the assault but they were driven back when troops retaliated. In a separate incident, three LTTE cadres were killed when they tried to infiltrate the forward defense lines at Panaliya north of Jaffna. One of these terrorists is reported to have gone up to security forces bunker and spoke to the soldiers there in Sinhala. However, the soldiers had not fallen to this lure and attacked the Tigers immediately.

At least one terrorist was killed when the LTTE ambushed a security forces (?vehicle) near Miravodai, south of Valachchenai, in the Batticaloa District yesterday. The terrorists fled carrying their casualties when troops opened fire. The subsequent search operation resulted in the recovery of the body of one LTTE cadre and some arms and military equipment. The security forces suffered no casualties.

The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry also reports that the LTTE shot dead member of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization [TELO] at (Trinkalan) northwest of Batticaloa. Another TELO member was injured when a powerful bomb delivered to the TELO office at Akkaraipattu exploded. The victim, identified as (Dharmamurthy Anbu), has been admitted

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to the Batticaloa Hospital. Police are conducting investigations. THIS REPORT MAY CONTAIN

LTTE Steps Up 'Terror' Campaign on Tamil Parties

BK2912121295 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is stepping up its campaign of terror against Tamil political parties in the northeast. At least five members of rival Tamil groups were assassinated by the Tigers this week alone. The victims included two senior officials of TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization] and PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam]. Tamil politicians say that this development follows the capture of Jaffna in Operation Riviresa. They point out that the LTTE is determined to crush any democratic movement among the Tamil people.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE, have adopted a diplomatic stance in dealing with the Tamil people following several stand offs with the civilians. Reports reaching Colombo from the North said that the Tigers have adopted diplomacy after large numbers of people, some of whom have been forced to vacate their homes and shops by the LTTE during the Operation Riviresa, openly began to (?confront) them and at least on two occasions beat up the LTTE police cadres in anger. The first instance had occurred at Nelliady in the peninsula when people have been prevented from handing over the letters of protest against the LTTE for forcibly removing for their own use [words indistinct] to civilians. On being prevented by the Tiger police from meeting the LTTE hierarchy to hand over the letter, the civilians had turned their wrath on the police and assaulted them.

On another occasion at Velvettiturai, the birthplace of Tiger leader Prabhakaran, Sea Tiger cadres in a Pajero jeep had ordered civilians to leave the area for fear of an advance by the military. According to reports, the people had openly protested against the order and asked how the Tigers who could not protect the birthplace of their leader could be expected to save the civilians. Another instance was at Point Pedro when the LTTE had asked the people displaced from Walikamam to go to Wanni. The displaced had protested and told the Tigers that they would not be leaving the area as long the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] was there.

Sporadic fighting between the LTTE and the security forces has left at least 17 dead across the Northern and Eastern provinces. The operations headquarters of the Ministry of Defense says that troops confronted a group of terrorists near Palaly killing 15 of them. They also recovered weapons and other military equipment. There were no casualties among the security forces. In another incident, the LTTE gunman killed a civilian in the Trincomalee District. Meanwhile, troops killed another terrorist in the Batticaloa District.

LTTE Uses 'Diplomatic' Tactics With Civilians

BK2912070895 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Dec 95

[Report by Panduka Senanayake — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have adopted a diplomatic stance in dealing with the Tamil people following several 'standoffs' with the civilians, reports reaching Colombo from the north said.

According to them, the Tigers have adopted diplomacy after large numbers of people, some of whom had been forced to vacate their homes and shops by the LTTE during Operation 'Riviresa' [sunshine] openly began to confront them and at least on two occasions beat up the LTTE police cadres in anger.

The first instance had occurred at Nelliadi in the peninsula when people had been prevented from handing over a letter of protest against the LTTE for forcibly removing, for their own use, foodstuff sent to the civilians. On being prevented by the Tiger police from meeting the LTTE hierarchy to hand over the letter, the civilians had turned their wrath on the police and assaulted them, reports said.

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Another instant was at Point Pedro, when the LTTE had asked the people displaced from Valikamam to go to the Vanni. The displaced had protested and told the Tigers that they would not be leaving the area as long as the ICRC was there.

Meanwhile the people of Kilinochchi too have protested against the allocation of land by the Tigers to the people of Jaffna. They have said that these people who were forced to leave the peninsula during Operation 'Riviresa,' would end up owning land not only in Jaffna

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but in Kilinochchi area as well, thereby depriving the people of Kilinochchi, who had to suffer a similar fate in the 1960s.

An instance where the civilians had assaulted the terrorists for refusing passes to travel south to Vavuniya was also reported.

Several instances where the Tigers had opened fire at Tamil civilians who had defied Tiger orders and tried to get back to their homes in the Valikamam sector now under military control, were also reported.

These shootings, merely to threaten, had occurred at several places in Thennamarachchi area, Sarasalai and also at Kalmunai Point off Pooneryn.

The Tigers had opened fire last week at the sails of several boats of fishermen who were making use of sailboats to sneak into their homes in the areas under military control.

"These increased confrontations have forced the LTTE to be more diplomatic in their dealings with the people now," said a traveller from the north adding that the LTTE cadres were now trying to build a new image of themselves. "They now try to talk us into doing things rather than prod us with the gun," said the traveller.

Meanwhile the LTTE have also begun shifting their heavy equipment and machinery such as lathes to the mainland from the Vadamarachchi area for fear of a military offensive against their bases in the area, according to civilians arriving in Colombo from the north.

They said that the Tigers have already dismantled and sent most of the machinery used in the making of mortars and other amunitions to Kilinochchi in the mainland, which they hope to make into the capital of their de-facto eelam following the capture of Jaffna town by the 'Riviresa' troops.

LTTE Radio Reports 2 Leaders Killed in Fighting

BK2812031695 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 28 Dec 95

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] clandestine radio announced that two of their military leaders "Major" Krishnakumar and "Captain" Babu were killed by the army during fighting at Shanthiveli, Batticaloa, Eastern Province, on Saturday, our Vavuniya Special correspondent reported.

Travellers from the North have told our correspondent that the LTTE has permitted the holding of classes only up to year 6 in schools in the Tiger-held areas in the North, as children in higher classes are to be conscripted. The LTTE has also announced that their "public offices" and "courts" will not function until the army leaves Jaffna.

Army bomb disposal experts yesterday defused two bombs planted by the LTTE in a busy lane in Batticaloa, following a tip-off.

Tigers on Sunday destroyed three transformers and one pylon damaging the high tension transmission line at Pottuvil, Veeramunai, Vanniyar and Villiniahi in Ampara district, Eastern Province, a Defence Ministry communique said yesterday.

Troops on Monday ambushed a group of Tigers at Siththaru about 30 kms south of Trincomalee, Eastern Province, inflicting heavy losses on them. One soldier was injured and was admitted to Trincomalee Navy hospital.

Meanwhile, our Polonnaruwa district correspondent reported that a group of tamil rebels had removed a radio communication set from the Mahaweli B office at Dimbulagala, North Central Province, on Saturday.

About 20 heavily armed rebels dressed in army-style uniform had threatened the watcher and the care-taker of the Block office before forcing open the office. Aralaganwila Police are investigating.

Troops Continue 'Mopping-Up Operation' in Jaffna

BK2912072995 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Dec 95

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] 'pistol gang' stalking Tamil rival groups shot dead a TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation) member at Chenkalady 10 kms South of Batticaloa in the Eastern Province on Wednesday, military sources in Colombo said.

Another TELO member was critically injured when a parcel bomb he received exploded in his office at Arapattai the same day. The victim was later admitted to Batticaloa hospital. The parcel bomb is believed to have been sent by the LTTE.

The LTTE in its bid to become the sole representative of the Tamil people gunned down the TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam and over 500 activists of the group in a landmark blood bath in the North several years ago. The TELO which itself was a militant outfit at the time survived this massacre and later entered the political mainstream.

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Meanwhile in the north, Troops engaged in mopping up operations in the peninsula on Wednesday ambushed a large group of Tigers at Puttur East off Palaly, killing at least 15 of them, a Defence Ministry release said on Thursday.

Tigers had fled carrying their casualties. Troops later recovered seven bodies including the body of a female Tiger and some arms and ammunition.

Troops also ambushed a group of rebels at Mirodai off Valachchenai, Eastern Province, killing at least one rebel on Wednesday. Terrorists fled the area carrying their casualties, the Defence Ministry said.

Troops had not suffered casualties in any of the confrontations on Wednesday.

On Tuesday rebels shot dead a Tamil civilian named Swasodi Rakeswarasa in Trincomalee town, Eastern Province.

Meanwhile, our Trincomalee district correspondent reported that troops killed one Tiger in a gun fight at Mirodai in eastern Valachchenai, at dawn Thursday.

LTTE Details Colombo Bombing Raids on Mullaitivu

BK2812134795 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 27 Dec 95

[Compilation of telephone messages of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Supersonic jets of the Sri Lankan Air Force resorted to heavy bombing raids on Muthaiankattu locality in Mullaitivu District yesterday. A number of aircraft appeared around 0800 and dropped several bombs on civilian settlements. Meanwhile, troops from the Mullaitivu military camp shelled coastal villages heavily. Although civilian casualties were averted during the two raids, all settlements have been badly damaged. During the attack on Mattalan village, several heads of cattle were killed and a number of civilian dwellings damaged.

Two people, including a three-year old boy, were killed on the spot in shellings by troops from Tandiadi camp in the Madhutivu regional secretariat [cheyalakam] in Batticaloa. The two people killed in the attack are Ambika Vairamuthu and Mayilvakanan Sasikaran. Three people, who were seriously injured in the attack on last Sunday [24 December] have been admitted to the Batticalao Hospital.

On 22 December, fierce fighting broke out quite unexpectedly with troops in the Jaffna locality. The losses suffered by the troops in the clash, which lasted for half an hour, is not known. From our side, second lieutenant Azhagu Lakshmanan Rajakaran embraced martyrdom. In an accidental bomb blast in Manal Aru locality on the same day, Valiant Tiger Vasanthakumar attained martyrdom. Our salutes of reverence to these national heroes, who sacrificed their valuable lives for the liberation of our motherland.

The troops are continuing their kidnappings in the Batticaloa District. Four civilians, who went to the Kopai forest area to collect firewood the day before yesterday, have been abducted by troops. The abducted innocent civilians are: Vinayakamoorthy Karalasingham, Thiagaraja Jaishankar, Ponnambalam Koneswaran, and Periyathambi Velakkadi. Their relatives say that so far, they do not know anything about the abductees. [passage omitted]

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

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Meanwhile in the north, Troops engaged in mopping up operations in the peninsula on Wednesday ambushed a large group of Tigers at Puttur East off Palaly, killing at least 15 of them, a Defence Ministry release said on Thursday.

Tigers had fled carrying their casualties. Troops later recovered seven bodies including the body of a female Tiger and some arms and ammunition.

Troops also ambushed a group of rebels at Mirodai off Valachchenai, Eastern Province, killing at least one rebel on Wednesday. Terrorists fled the area carrying their casualties, the Defence Ministry said.

Troops had not suffered casualties in any of the confrontations on Wednesday.

On Tuesday rebels shot dead a Tamil civilian named Swasodi Rakeswarasa in Trincomalee town, Eastern Province.

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